

FOREWORD

The impetus for this work arose from discussions with Alexander Kazhdan during the time I spent at Dumbarton Oaks as a Fellow and as an external reader. Of importance, too, was the fact that my work in Departments of Classics in Canada brought my teaching and research interests closer to the ancient world. The subject of the present book also represents a return to a topic that I had studied at the beginning of my career, the Byzantine city, at the National Research Foundation in Athens. It was there that Professor Dionysios Zakynthos kindly included me in a research group, placing me under the supervision of Professors Chryssa Maltezos and Anna Avramea who gave me guidance during my first works on Byzantine cities.

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FIG. 1. Scythopol. View of Palladius Street with the acropolis in the background.

CHAPTER 1

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES AND CURRENT STATE OF SCHOLARSHIP

The fear of a priori is misplaced; any hypothesis can be modified, adjusted or discarded when necessary. Without one, however, there can be no explanation; there can be only description and classification.¹

It is only recently that the Byzantine city was established as a central theme in Byzantine history. Over recent decades, in the context of an increasing interest in Late Antiquity, the study of late antique city has become a central concern, the volume and quality of works on the subjects multiplying rapidly.² In the words of W. Brandes "a flood of literature which one can scarcely read, let alone master" has been produced on early Byzantine cities.³ A variety of subjects and numerous archaeological sites have been investigated in constantly increasing publications. Old questions have been answered, while others still await an answer. We now have studies on specific historical issues and archaeological sites, and some major synthetic works, besides. The following pages are not intended to offer a survey of bibliography on the Byzantine cities, however, but to examine the major approaches to the subject and current scholarly debate. Emphasis will be placed on works that are relevant to the present study. It should also be stressed that the study of the early Byzantine city, in particular, the city in the sixth century, cannot be detached from the urban changes of the seventh and eighth centuries, because many of these changes were anticipated before the Byzantine Dark Ages.

Until the fifties of the last century, it was firmly believed that, in contrast to the mediaeval West, urban life in Byzantium continued uninterrupted from the early period, with little transformation over the centuries. Administrative changes and Christianity had, of course, modified many ancient urban institutions and architectural features, but the overall picture then obtaining was that of continuity in the social and economic structure of the cities of the early Byzantine centuries. This view was so firmly rooted in scholarly tradition, that, although scholarly debate during the second half of the twentieth century on profound transformation of urban life in the Byzantine Dark Ages produced several remarkable

¹ M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Historian and his Sources*, in E. Gabba (ed.), *Trius Corda. Scritti in onore di Arnaldo Momigliano* (Como 1983), 214.

² There are various bibliographical surveys on early Byzantine cities: Brandes, *Byz. Stadt*, 179 ff.; idem, *Sidde*, 18-22; Ch. Bouras, *City and Village: Urban Design and Architecture*, *JOB* 31/2 (1981), 611-653; I. Lavan, *The late-antique city: a bibliographical essay*, *LAA* 2 (2004), 9-26.

³ Brandes, *Byzantine Cities*, 57.

studies, it is only relatively lately that the phenomenon of urban change has been included in broad studies of Byzantine culture and history.⁴ On the other hand, Roman historians approached the question of the late antique city from their own perspective. The major standard work on the Hellenistic, Roman and early Byzantine city by A. H. M. Jones, *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian*, dealt mainly with administrative and financial changes in early Byzantine cities, and did so only in a brief chapter, while ignoring other aspects of the transformation of the urban fabric.⁵ The historical view that the decline of the Late Roman empire was caused by vulgarization of culture, the consequences of the third-century crisis and of the destruction of the traditional urban élite, as formulated by Rostovtzeff,⁶ has long dominated scholarship. With the passage of time, however, it was felt that the late Roman historian, detached from such mental attitudes, had to approach the sources from new different angles.

The impetus for a new direction in approaches to Byzantine urban history was given by A. Kazhdan in the 1950s, who formulated the theory of a dramatic urban decline in the seventh and eighth centuries. Kazhdan first discerned a change in urban life in the decline of series of coins of the seventh and eighth centuries in museum collections. He also pointed to the lack of archaeological evidence from these centuries at most excavated sites, which certainly indicates a poverty of material life and decline in urban structures. He also drew attention to the Arabic sources that offer a direct testimony to the rarity of Byzantine cities in this period.⁷ On the basis of this evidence, he concluded that the decline of the urban system in the early Middle Ages was related to a ruralization of the empire.⁸ This theory suggested that Byzantium and its cities had undergone a radically new structural change: the earlier heavily urbanized provinces of the Eastern part of the Roman empire now suffered a decline and assumed a new rural character. According to this picture, when Byzantine cities re-appeared in the historical record in the tenth century, they had acquired a new socio-economic and administrative structure. This theory, revolutionary as it was for Byzantine scholarship, shifted the focus from urban administrative and religious change to change in economic and social structures. It also pointed to the value of new evidence derived from coins, thus opening the way to an exploration of archaeological material, which had been traditionally excluded from historical investigation.

Kazhdan's theory was not challenged immediately. Instead, it provoked an analysis of the historiographical sources. Four years later, at the XIth International Byzantine Congress, E. Kirsten presented aspects of the changing character of the cities from the early Byzantine period and stressed their mediaeval structure.⁹ He discussed methodological approaches to the study of Byzantine urbanism, and referred to the various sources that still needed exploration. This analysis was complemented by D.

Zakynthos,¹⁰ who pointed particularly to the various forms in which the transition from the early Byzantine to the mediaeval cities is manifested: some cities survived with modifications to their city-planning. Others were relocated to a new site, but maintained their ancient name, while others received a new name. Several cities, however, disappeared forever. Both Kirsten and Zakynthos placed the end of the early Byzantine period in the middle of the seventh century, and considered it to be a consequence of the Arab invasions. They traced, however, the first signs of urban transformation to the late fifth century. Immediately afterwards F. Dölger studied the structure of early Byzantine cities in a comprehensive paper read at the IIIrd International Congress of Studies on the Early Middle Ages in 1956.¹¹ Although he acknowledged that profound transformations occurred in various aspects of the urban structure, administrative and social, he stressed the continuity of urban centres from the early to the middle Byzantine period.

These initial approaches to the question of urban transformation led to further discussion of the value of the evidence. While Byzantinists seemed to agree that the new term *kastros*, and administrative and social transformations clearly indicate profound changes in the cities, and the relocation and abandonment of cities suggest the decline of many urban centres, it was particularly the value of the numismatic evidence that was now disputed. G. Ostrogorsky, in his paper *Byzantine Cities in the Early Middle Ages*,¹² questioned the validity of Kazhdan's theory, arguing that, although series of bronze coins declined over the seventh and eighth centuries, the issue of gold coins continued uninterrupted. Arguing that gold coins were more important for the vitality of the urban economy, Ostrogorsky inevitably reached the opposite conclusion. Ostrogorsky also studied the evidence of lists of bishoprics, which show that, with a few exceptions, bishoprics continued to exist during the Byzantine Dark Ages, especially in Asia Minor, which, he maintained, indicated that cities survived. An objection to this argument was presented by E. Franzen, who pointed to political considerations that made it expedient either to maintain bishoprics in urban centres that had declined or to elevate small settlements to the status of bishoprics.¹³ In the West bishoprics also survived, while most of the cities disappeared. It was evident that a bishopric was not necessarily an urban feature. Evidence from terminology marshalled by Ostrogorsky to indicate that urban life continued in this period has also been disputed, since terminology drawn from these sources may be misleading, because the sources copied earlier texts.¹⁴

At the same time as Ostrogorsky's response, Irina Sokolova interpreted the numismatic material from a different perspective and reached a similar conclusion. She suggested that the reduction of hoards in the eighth and early ninth centuries indicates economic and political stability. Sokolova explains the decline in coins as a consequence of the policy of the ninth-century emperors, who removed the coins of the iconoclast emperors from circulation.¹⁵ The range of interpretations of the coin evidence

⁴ *Manuscript*, 60-67. The book of A. P. Rodskiy, *Očerki vizantijskoi kul'tury po dannym grecheskoi istoriografii* (Moscow 1917) includes a chapter on Byzantine cities. However, the book written in Russian has been largely ignored by scholars. I. Krieger, *Byzantinische Städte im Mittelalter* (Thessalonica 4th ed. 1964), 416-427; A. Chazet, *Byzantine Cities*, *Revue de l'histoire de l'Asie Mineure* 1962, 362-367. Byzantinists from the East European countries showed awareness of the importance of the subject much earlier. M. Ia. Svirskiy, *Istorija Vizantijskoi kul'tury* II, 23-32; D. Anaglik, *Istorija na Vizantijska I* (195-667) (Sofia, 5th ed. 1972), 226-241.

⁵ Ostrogorsky, *op. cit.* 1971, 251-258. The lack of emphasis on the physical aspect of cities is general in early historiographical studies. Tyschbeke hardly mentions cities in his two-volume work. See the remarks of L. Mumford in C. H. Kraeling and R. M. Adams (eds.), *City in the East: A Symposium on Urbanism and Cultural Development in the Ancient Near East held at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Dec. 4-7, 1958* (Chicago 1960), 241.

⁶ M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, 2nd ed. revised by P. M. Fraser (Oxford 1957), 523 ff.

⁷ See also later Haldon, *Some Considerations*, 92-94.

⁸ *Vizantijskij gorod v VII-XI vv.*, *Sovetskaja Arheologija* 21 (1954), 164-188.

⁹ *Die Byzantinische Stadt*, in *Bericht zum XI. internationalen Byzantinistenkongress* (Münich 1958), 5, 3, pp. 1-48.

¹⁰ Korreferat zu E. Kirsten, *Die byzantinische Stadt*, *ibid.*, 48-51; *idem*, *La ville byzantine*, *ibid.*, 75-90 (*Dokumentebeiträge*). For a new discussion on the reduction of cities to towns with a limited role, military and administrative or ecclesiastical see Brandes, *Byzantine Cities*, 25-31.

¹¹ *Die frühbyzantinische und byzantinisch beeinflusste Stadt (V-VIII Jahrhundert)*, in *Actes du 3^e congrès international de études sur l'Afrique Méditerranéenne, Benevento-Montevergine-Salerno-Anagni, 14-18 Octobre 1956* (Spoleto 1959), 65-100.

¹² *DOP* 13 (1959), 47-66, repr. in *Zur byzantinischen Geschichte* (Darmstadt 1973), 99-115.

¹³ E. Franzen, *La ville byzantine et la monnaie au VII^e-VIII^e siècles*, *Revue de l'histoire de l'Asie Mineure* 1962, 362-367. See also P. Calverley, *Les évêques réfugiés d'Éphèse aux 5^e-13^e siècles*, *REB* 45 (1987), 139-164, esp. 161-162; Brandes, *Byzantine Cities*, 41-44; *Historia Byzantina*, 121-122.

¹⁴ Brandes, *Byz. Stadt*, 192-193; *idem*, *Städte*, 35-36; Kazhdan, *Polis*.

¹⁵ I. B. Sokolova, *Klady vizantijskich monet kak isopok dja isosvi Vizanti VIII-IX vv.*, *IV* 15 (1975), 50-63.

Clearly there was a lack of communication among numismatists, historians and archaeologists regarding the study of the Byzantine economy in the early Middle Ages.¹¹ Difficulties were caused because the conceptual framework for each of these disciplines is different and employs different tools and methods of research. The sources and therefore the data which are the subject of study of each discipline are so vast, that it is practically impossible for a specialist in one field to possess knowledge of another field to a satisfactory degree. The inevitable result is that scholars depend on the conclusions of others – instead of on the evidence itself, thus giving rise to a negative cross-fertilization.¹² Over the course of the following years, however, while the debate continued, most scholars came to accept that the decline of series of coins at the major excavated sites indicated reduced economic activity in the seventh and eighth centuries.¹³ Especially significant was the conclusion that, although new discoveries substantially increased the number of coins found, they did not affect the proportion of coins per cemetery established on the basis of earlier excavations.¹⁴ D. M. Metcalf expressed scepticism regarding the value of coin finds from ancient city centres. Since marketplaces were relocated to other parts of the city, this, in Metcalf's view, accounts for the absence of coins in the traditional civic centre of forum or agora. Metcalf also suggested that the decline in quantities of follis could have been caused by a reduction in the number issued by central government.¹⁵ The importance of the role of the state in the

²² See the remarks of R. S. Lopez, *Une histoire à trois avatars: la circulation monétaire*, in *Méthodologie de l'histoire et des sciences humaines*, Mémoires de l'Association française pour l'étude du Moyen-Orient, t. 1 (Paris, 1982), p. 107.

Relationships with History, Geography, Biology and Physical Science (R&H Int. Series 83), 32-39, Brandon, Dartmouth College, VT.

19. C. A. Lounsbury, 'The Significance of Corn as Evidence for the History of Athens and Corinth in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries, B.C.', *JA* 4 (1935), 162-172; also, 'A Note on the Pyraeotic Corn Finds in Sardis and their Historical Significance', *EA* 7 (1947) 187-191; 175-180; D. M. Metcalf, 'The Currency of Pyraeotic Coins in Sicily and Sardinia', *Manchester Bull. for Numismatics* 14 (1969), 429-444; G. Grieco, *Monetae*, expresses scepticism regarding the value of archaeological evidence; Pyraeotic Critique, *Proc. of a Philological survey on the value of numismatic evidence for the study of urban life in Byzantium* (see Brussels, 1981, No. 34), C. N. Mourouzis, *Byzance au VIII^e siècle: le témoignage de la numismatique*, in *Revue des Études Byzantines* (New York), N. Zepheris 1 (Athens 1980), 149-165.

1987, 73-75.

²⁷ M. Minard, *How Europe was the Issue of Polio during the Years 1773-1873*, Brussels 17 (1967), 178-180.

At the XIth International Byzantine Congress focused on Byzantine cities, P. Lemerle's paper¹ on the transforming of the Byzantine city to feudalism caused the realization of Byzantine cities, as a "major entity" replacing a mosaic of smaller units of the same origin. P. Lemerle, rejecting the view that Byzantine society was feudal, focused on the "evolution" of the state over the administrative and socio-economic structure of the empire (Eurasianism). For Lemerle, the greater emphasis on the countryside and the rural economy in the Byzantine Dark Ages, a consequence of the "collapse" of the state and the ruralization of the cities, and the economy did not turn to heretic D. Zakythinos, did not bring about the same results. He pointed out that the "collapse" of the state was not the cause of the economic retrograde action *La grande brèche dans la tradition historique de l'Hellénisme du septième au neuvième siècle*. He also noted the onset of a break during two centuries from the middle of the seventh to the middle of the tenth century. The economic decline in the excavated sites constituted the main argument in support of the view that there was a general decline in the economy during these centuries. Of course, the Slavonic invasions played a major role in the economic decline and the natural catastrophes of the tenth century were also a major factor. But above all, for Zakythinos, it was the "halcyon days" of the Arabs that disrupted trade and brought about the collapse of the economy and the economic stagnation period. The major manifestation of this crisis, he concluded, was the *disurbanization* of the empire. Thus, following the Persian thesis, placed the decline of the ancient city in a much broader context, recognizing the impact that the Arab supremacy in the Eastern Mediterranean had on the socio-economic structure of the Byzantine cities. He also approached the problem of the decline of urban centers in the East. He accepted that the army was a major factor in over-centralization and thus the establishment of the strong state, in which the payment of the soldiers was no longer made in cash, played a role in the reduction of the role of the city. The army was granted for many years, to be revitalized by M. Hoesch.² Zakythinos' historical analysis firmly established the existence of the crisis and separated it from the dispute on the value of monasticism, monasteries.

The view that ancient cities underwent a profound transformation and subsequent decline since the 19th century has been generally accepted and new scholarly works concentrated on various aspects of the tatters, place and causes of the change. Individual cities became the subject of case studies. For example, the literature on Antioch offered valuable material for the study of administrative and social structures in the early period.²⁰ The decline of the *curial class* is fully documented in Libanios' orations and other literary and legislative texts. Cities were gradually depopulated by this group, which for centuries had sustained building activities and urban institutions, while the cities' economic resources passed north and east to the new centres of the empire, Constantinople and the Levant.²¹ The first major comprehensive study on Byzantine cities, by J. H. W. G. D. Jones, focused on the 5th century. The *Neurokratische Stadt in der Spätantike* (Münch 1989), the author collected much valuable material on the cities of the 5th century, and the 'logical' reports and presented it in a major synthesis, which examined urban planning and the civic, administrative, social and economic structure. The focus of Claude's study, however, is on antiquity, rather than on the transformation of urban life and the work of a value in that it offers much new

²⁷ N. V. Piguinskaya, *Grecis / decrease + Vizanti + IV-VI vv. / Ist. Congress. 12 / 1962*, 2, 1-4. For a similar approach by other scholars of the Marxist historical school, see, for example, E. M. Šaracian, *Evangelije antiohijske i njihovo izdavanje* (Antioch: n.p., 1974), 13-14 (1975), 3-14.

[illegible]

information drawn from the sources, although it does not always evaluate their real historical significance. The works of G. I. Kurbatov have advanced our knowledge of the evolution of early Byzantine urbanism from a different perspective.³⁰ In his *Osnovy problema vnutrennego razvitiya vizantijskogo gosudarstva v IV–VII vv.* (Leningrad 1971), Kurbatov presented the transformation of what had already started socio-economic structure of the cities and of the urban space as a slow process that had already started in the fourth century. In Kurbatov's view, the real crisis of the cities started not in the middle of the seventh century, but in the middle of the sixth, appearing first in small towns and later in the large cities. Today recent archaeological studies prove his conclusion correct. Unfortunately, the book, written in Russian, was accessible only to a limited number of scholars.

In the 1970s, scholarly interest shifted to archaeological investigation. On the basis of archaeological evidence alone, C. Foss gave new direction to the study of the causes of the cities' decline. After the destruction of Sardis by fire in the early seventh century, the city never recovered. Its series of coins was interrupted, the site was abandoned to a large degree, and there is other evidence of economic decline and depopulation. The destruction of Sardis is attributed by Foss to a Persian invasion of 616, which is not recorded in the written sources.³¹ Foss, however, recognizes that the causes of the phenomenon were complex, "for the reduction in the area of cities implies a great decline of the population which is not a necessary consequence of war, but there is no doubt that a major transformation took place".³² Foss looked at the city's demise in the archaeological evidence, although his attempt to explain the decline as being due to outside factors alone did not convince.³³ The importance of the archaeological evidence and of the literary sources was once again stressed by Kazhdan, who showed that the systematically gathered material in the *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* (Hellas and Thessaly), primarily from literary sources, testifies to the decline of urban life in these areas after the seventh century.³⁴

C. Mango in his *Byzantine: The Empire of New Rome* offered a more refined synthesis of the complex causes of urban decline.³⁵ Mango depicts the gradual abandonment of the theatres, hippodromes, and temples as a result of cultural change, as Christianity firmly manifested itself in the cityscape through the proliferation of churches and monasteries. In Mango's view, the disintegration of the cities started in the sixth century and was caused by droughts, plagues and earthquakes. Urban violence also played a role. Mango concludes:

There can be little doubt that the plagues of the sixth century, combined with an unprecedented sequence of natural disasters, were a factor, perhaps the determining factor, in the collapse of urban life. For it is a fact (though some historians still

³⁰ Spieser, *Théologie*, 88 n. 47 ("en partance des siècles").

³¹ *Russko-anticheskij gosudarstvennyj karta i karta istorii v vizantijskij vremeni* (IV–VII vv.) (Moscow 1956), item, *Russko-anticheskij gosudarstvennyj karta i karta istorii v vizantijskij vremeni* (Leningrad 1962).

³² Foss, *The Persians*, 721–747, esp. 736–738; item, *The Fall of Sardis in 616 and the Value of Evidence*, *JOB* 24 (1972), 11–22; item, *Byzantine and Turkish Sardis* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1976), 53–56; item, *Ephesus*, 99; item, *Archaeology and the "Twelve Cities" of Byzantine Asia*, *ASA* 81 (1977), 469–496, esp. 476–477; item, *Late Antique and Byzantine Ankara*, *DOP* 11 (1977), 29–47; item, *Coin, Archaeology and the Decline of Classical Cities in Asia Minor*, in F. Lal Grita and A. Karam (eds.), *Studies in Classical Archaeology, Numismatics and Archaeology*, *Annuaire* 88, 1987 (*Journal of Research in Numismatic Studies*) (Nashik 1987), 32–44.

³³ Foss, *The Persians*, 747.

³⁴ F. Chazotte, *A Note on the Byzantine Coin Finds in Sardis and their Historical Significance*, *JEB* 30–40 (1972–73), 175–180; A. Kefau, in *Byzantine* 9 (1977), 478–484; Kazhdan and Corcoran, *Continuity*, 483–484; W. Bruns, *Ephesus in Byzantine times*, *ZoN*, *Klio* 54 (1962), 611–622; Rostovtzev, *The Decline*.

³⁵ A. Kazhdan, *Byzantine* 11 (1982), 452 ff.

³⁶ pp. 46–47.

refuse to recognize it) that all round the Mediterranean the cities, as they had existed in antiquity, contracted and then practically disappeared. This happened at different times in different provinces, and the immediate cause was usually foreign invasion. The ease with which walled cities fell to an enemy who was often neither very numerous nor skilled in siege warfare, and the absence of any urban resurgence after the enemy had withdrawn show, however, that military hostilities were merely the last shock that brought down a tottering edifice.³⁶

Mango's next major work on Byzantine urbanism, *Le développement urbain de Constantinople* (Paris 1985), broadened the discussion by demonstrating that even the capital was affected by the crisis of the seventh and eighth centuries. The inhabited area and the size of population were reduced, while the suburbs and aqueducts were devastated by invasion. Thus the problem was more complex and widespread than was generally recognized, the only variation being the degree of the crisis in each one of the cities. In the same year J. Haldon stressed the decline of cities in the Byzantine Dark Ages: "The seventh century, and much of the eighth, saw, I believe, an almost total eclipse of urban life".³⁷

Gradually more attention was paid to ideological change. In 1980 J.-M. Spieser remarked that besides the political and administrative factors the historian who studies the development of early Byzantine urbanism should also examine the ideological aspects: "il faudrait étudier quelles ont été les modalités idéologiques et pratiques qui ont rendu possible le développement d'un urbanisme monumental avant de pouvoir rendre compte de ce qui a causé son déclin".³⁸ However, he pointed out that the decline of the monumental appearance of the cities led scholars to believe that the cities had been reduced to communities which could not be called cities. Spieser focused on administrative and ideological change and the redistribution of wealth which now flowed through the Church:

C'est ce changement qui rend irréversible un déclin de la ville, sous la forme qu'elle avait dans le monde gréco-romain, déclin qui n'est donc pas nécessairement le reflet d'un appauvrissement de ses habitants et pas seulement celui d'un affaiblissement de l'Empire. La tentative de restauration urbaine de Justinien et la crise due aux invasions du VII^e siècle ont masqué la nature profonde du changement.³⁹

Haldon defined the transition from ancient to medieval society and economy in the context of cultural change:

What sort of transition was this? How is it best described? – as a shift in the whole structure of a social formation, involving economic, political and cultural relations? – or as a transition within an ideological framework, in which emphases shift, and where values and attitudes which had previously been contextually impossible now come to dominate and to determine the appearance of the culture? I think there can be little doubt that these two are in fact inseparable.⁴⁰

³⁶ pp. 68–69.

³⁷ Haldon, *Some Considerations*, 77–78.

³⁸ Spieser, *Théologie*, 88.

³⁹ Item, *L'évolution de la ville byzantine de l'époque paléochrétienne à l'islamisme*, in *Byzance et richesses* 1, 198.

⁴⁰ Haldon, *Some Considerations*, 76.

Thus the question of cities' decline came to be formulated in a broad context of socio-economic and cultural changes and in the framework of cultural continuity and discontinuity.⁴¹ At the same time questions were asked about the nature of the urban change: should the phenomenon be labelled as "urban decline" or as "transformation"? W. Treadgold pointed to the medieval Byzantine cities with their Roman defensive urban transformation as decline by comparing the medieval Byzantine cities with their Roman predecessors, which were adorned with magnificent public buildings. In the seventh and eighth centuries, Byzantine cities actually shrank to the size of classical Greek cities and the number of public officers of the administration to that of the early Roman empire. In Treadgold's view, the reduced physical environment of early Byzantine cities should not, therefore, be taken as implying decline in other forms of culture.⁴² Discussion particular to various schools of historical thought tends to debate whether the phenomenon should be defined as decline or transformation, break or continuity.⁴³ Thus, for example, Averil Cameron favours transformation instead of decline, while J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz insists on decline, which he defines as degradation and shrinkage.⁴⁴ A similar controversy is noticeable in Italian scholarly works regarding the fate of the Italian cities at the end of Late Antiquity and in the early Middle Ages.⁴⁵ Even the relocation of cities, which is traditionally taken as evidence of an urban crisis, may be interpreted as "la persistenza del fenomeno urbano". Thus, having accepted the urban crisis at the level of economic life and material environment, urban continuity is defined predominantly as an "ideological continuity", although the physical landscape and socio-economic structure of cities was transformed.⁴⁶ Yet another approach has been proposed: one should identify specific aspects of urban life that show continuity and those that reveal change from the earlier ones.⁴⁷

J. Koder examined patterns of settlement distribution around cities in the early Byzantine period in the light of theories that established principles of correlation between cities and agrarian settlements. Geographical factors, rich countryside, old density of settlements and proximity to the sea are predominant factors in the density of settlements in the early Byzantine period. However, in some cases the written sources are misleading. For example, the *Strabon-Lexikon* list contains settlements ranked as cities on the basis of historical tradition, rather than on the basis of their economic prosperity and demographic development.⁴⁸

⁴¹ M. In, *Sijgurnas. Nekrologas pirmosios istoriografo tarybos Viena* (Lietuva, 1973), 3-18; G. Wain, *Antike und Byzanz. Die Kontinuität der Gesellschaftsstruktur. Historische Zeitschrift* 224 (1977), 529-560; V. Vasiliev, *The Eastern Roman Empire in Early Byzantium: A Society in Transition*, in *idem* (ed.), *From Late Antiquity to Early Byzantium. Proceedings of the Byzantinological Symposium in the 10th International Eirene Conference* (Prague 1985), 9-20; Kathleen and Cullen, *Continuity*.

⁴² W. Treadgold, *The Break in Byzantium and the Gap in Byzantine Studies*, *BuJF* 15 (1980), 289-316.

⁴³ Ward Perkins, *Urban Continuity*, 11-13.

⁴⁴ Cameron, *The Mediterranean World*, 41-6; R. 128-129, 157-158, 198; *idem*, *The perception of crisis, Settlements* 45 (1986), 4-14; *idem*, *Historians, R. Gornick, Byzantine Aphrodisias. Changing the Symbolic Map of a City, Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, 84 (1988), 28-32; A. Giordano, *Epistola di Iustiniano. Studi storici* 40 (1989), 157-180; J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Late Antiquity and the Concept of Decline, Nottingham Medieval Studies* 41 (2001), 1-11; *idem*, *The uses, and the responses of A. Cameron* (pp. 239-241); M. Whitton (pp. 241-243); L. Lavan (pp. 243-245).

⁴⁵ Ward Perkins, *Urban Continuity*, 12-13; *idem*, *Continuity, discontinuity, and the towns of post-Roman Northern Italy, PRSt* 61 (1987), 157-176.

⁴⁶ A. Carile, *La città medievale: aspetti e problemi, Rivista di Storia* 7 (1962), 104-106.

⁴⁷ A. Anguill, *Continuity and Discontinuity of a Seat of Power: the Palazzo Medici from the Fifth to the Twelfth Century*, in *Smith, Early Medieval Rome*, 43.

⁴⁸ J. Koder, *The Urban Character of the Early Byzantine Empire: Some Reflections on a Settlement Geographical Approach to the Topic, Rev. Compere* 33 (1986), 115-187, esp. 189-190.

In the 1980's more attention was paid to the archaeological evidence. This attention was driven by a conviction that, since the literary sources do not clearly describe the various aspects of urban transformation, particularly changes in city planning, population decline and economic crisis, the answer was to be found in the archaeological record. This was the focus of the symposium organized by the École Française de Rome in 1982, entitled *Villes et peuplement dans l'Byzance proto-byzantine*. Several papers presented archaeological evidence from the cities of Ilyricum and demonstrated that decline of these cities is clearly documented in archaeological excavations, with their final collapse caused by the Avaro-Slavic invasions. In a summary of the results of the symposium, P. Lemerle substantially revised his earlier views of the 1960s. While the Slavic invasions played a predominant role in the decline or destruction of the cities of the Ilyricum, it was obvious that the reasons for the phenomenon were to be found elsewhere.

Pourquoi? Faut-il dire que la ville avait perdu, avec l'ancienne classe dirigeante, son assise idéologique, sociale, politique, économique, et se trouva incapable de résister à un choc comme celui des Avars-Sklavins? Faut-il dire que le nouvel ordre, construit autour de l'Eglise, n'avait pas eu le temps de s'affirmer suffisamment lorsque le choc décisif survint? Faut-il, au contraire, chercher l'explication plutôt du côté du pouvoir central? ou le tout à la fois? C'est sans doute l'archéologie, si les fouilles sont bien faites et bien publiées, qui dictera la réponse. Pour l'instant, à l'exception de cas extrêmes et par conséquent peu significatifs, comme ceux, opposés, de Thessalonique et d'Athènes, trop rares sont les sites, comme Corinthe ou Stobi ou Philippes et le site à tous égards particulier de Caricin Grad, où les fouilles permettent déjà de poser des jalons. Du moins voit-on bien quelles questions il faut soumettre aux archéologues.⁴⁹

Thus the crucial role of the central government in the process of urban transformation was once again recognized. Furthermore, M. Angold argued that a major factor in the crisis of the cities in Late Antiquity was their progressive dependency upon Constantinople. After the loss of Syria and Egypt, the capital could not afford financial assistance to the cities to aid their recovery.⁵⁰ W. Müller-Wiener drew an overall picture of the cities' transformation from the point of view of topographical changes, namely, the closing up of porticoes, the reduced line of fortifications, and the implantation of churches in the urban fabric. The diminishing space which early Byzantine fortifications defended was taken at face value by Müller-Wiener, who considered it clear evidence of the cities' decline and their transformation from ancient into medieval.⁵¹

M. Hendy's studies on the Byzantine economy also focused on the role of the central government. The traditional view that the Byzantine economy was monetary was modified by Hendy, who suggested that the Byzantine economic system served not private transactions, but rather the state's fiscal and military needs. Thus, in his view, the state officers and the army constituted the basic dynamic in the circulation of coins. The decline of coins in the seventh and eighth centuries was interpreted by Hendy, as it was earlier by Zakythinos, as a consequence of the change of the system of military payments from

⁴⁹ *Villes et peuplement*, 519. Also Mango, *La ville*, 236 stresses the importance of archaeology for illuminating the cities' decline after the sixth century.

⁵⁰ M. Angold, *The Shaping of the Medieval Byzantine "City"*, *BuJF* 10 (1985), 1-37, esp. 2-7.

⁵¹ Müller-Wiener, *Von der Polis*.

From the 1980's, various studies have utilized archaeological material and drawn attention to profound urban changes in the early Byzantine period. First and foremost, archaeology shows the infiltration by barbarians of the provinces of the northern Balkans from an early period⁶³ and the corresponding disintegration of Greco-Roman urbanism. Summit, on the river Sava, capital of Panonia Secunda from the reign of Diocletian, is an example. In the third and fourth centuries it was an imperial residence, endowed with a hypocaust, a feature that normally only major cities could enjoy. Its disintegration began in the fifth century, when it was occupied by the Huns (411-453), the Ostrogoths from 455 who settled in Panonia, and the Gepids in 474. Theodoric occupied the city in 504, Justinian took it over in 535, but it was reconquered by the Gepids a year later. It fell to the Byzantines in the reign of Justin II in 567 and it was lost to the Avars in 582. In general, the cities of northern Illyricum suffered population decline and a slowdown in construction from the fifth century because of the invasions of the Huns and the Gepids, and the situation deteriorated further in the sixth century.⁶⁴ The invasions in the middle of the fifth century by the Huns and in 479 by the Ostrogoths are considered to be the reason for the decline of Stobi in Macedonia Secunda, the abandonment of large houses, signs of ruralization and the demise of old buildings. Urban life deteriorated. Only churches were restored and magisterially refurbished.⁶⁵ Thessalonica also suffered from the invasions of the Goths and the installation of Goths following after the battle of Adrianople in 378, and the later installation of the Ostrogoths of Theodoric. By the sixth century, the lines of the Double had become a zone of defence and also of contact and incorporation of foreign peoples within the empire.⁶⁶ The cities of the interior collapsed earlier, while those on the coast maintained their vitality longer thanks to contacts with the capital, before they were lost in the reign of Heraclius.⁶⁷

Archaeology also illustrates the fate of the cities in the provinces of the Balkans during the invasions of the Avars and Slavs. It reveals the situation prevailing in urban space just before the cities were destroyed by enemies, the disintegration of public space and the crowded conditions behind the walls, the nature and degree of the destruction caused by the invaders and, in some cases, the inhabitants' attempts to reconstruct their ruined cities, which was halted by a new wave of invasions. The work of V. Popović remains fundamental. Popović demonstrated the disintegration of ancient cities in the Balkans. He identified elements of ruralization in urban space on the eve of the invasions, caused by the influx from the countryside of refugees into the cities, who subsequently infiltrated urban space. In many sites the coexistence of Slavic and Byzantine pottery and artefacts shows either an early stage of integration by the invaders or of adoption of Byzantine material and cultural forms.⁶⁸ Excavations also reveal that afterwards the cities shrank in size, were impoverished and took on a new mediæval form. Some cities were destroyed and abandoned forever. Justiniana Prima, modern Cvetin Grad, was founded by Justinian near his birthplace Taurisum, in the province of Dardania in the Illyricum. Excavations revealed the layout of the sixth-century city and the changes produced in the inhabited area in the last

⁶³ Popović, *Les provinces archaéologiques*. *Ibid.*, *La décadence des Ostrogoths, des Slaves et des Avars vers la mer Égée: la disintégration de l'archaéologie CHA* (1978), 356-646, and the studies in *Illyria et peuplement* (D. O. Todor, *Origines et voies de pénétration des Slaves en nord du Danube (VI-VII^e siècles)*, 63-84; F. Ruzic, *Les témoignages archéologiques de la présence slave au nord du Danube*, *Ibid.*, 163-180; V. Popović, *Byzantium, Slaves et autochtones dans les provinces de Prévalonia et Scythia*, *Ibid.*, 181-242; *Academia, Le Paléopont*, 53-58, 72-104.

⁶⁴ Mikulic, *Stobi*, 285-293, 286.

⁶⁵ E. Zanti, *Création et destruction. 8 Sites d'habitation en VI^e siècle, Milan. Studi e ricerche d'arte bizantina* (Rome 1968), 287-293.

⁶⁶ *Palatium, Urbis*, 118, 127-128; *Ibid.*, *The End of Scythia*. *Mauro: the Archaeological Evidence*, in Mallett and Scott, *Byzantium*, 198-204.

⁶⁷ *See infra*, pp. 242, 448, 455.

years of the city's life (Plan I). During the reign of Justin II, when inhabitants from the suburbs and the countryside fled behind its walls for protection, crude new structures, workshops and dwellings appeared everywhere in the city's empty space. After the city was destroyed, a Slavic settlement appeared on the site, consisting of huts built on the ruins with deposits of handmade pottery.⁶⁹ Archaeological observations also led scholars to question earlier views to the effect that the collapse of some cities was caused by the enemies. Stobi, capital of Macedonia Secunda, today in FYROM, located between the rivers Vardar (Axius) and Crna (Trigun), was abandoned before its final destruction. After 569-570 the inhabitants probably sought refuge in the mountains. There is also evidence of destruction by earthquake, which probably occurred when most of the inhabitants had left. A small Slavic settlement was afterwards established on the ruins. The city's inhabitants did not return because of insecure conditions, the difficulty of rebuilding the destroyed city and the changing climatic conditions, which now required extensive irrigation.⁷⁰ Lemerle attributed the destruction of Philippi to the Slavic invasion, while Bakirtz suggested that a catastrophic earthquake may have been responsible. The inhabitants returned and started to rebuild their city, but it was now very much reduced and the inhabitants' means were very limited. The destruction of Thasos has also been attributed to the Slavs, but Bakirtz suggested that here, too, an earthquake damaged the city and forced its inhabitants to move to nearby sites.⁷¹ To the south, Thessalonica (Nea Anchialos) was also destroyed and abandoned at the end of the early Byzantine period. G. Soteriou concluded that the city was destroyed by the Slavs, since the pool of the baptistry of the Basilica A was used for a Slavic burial and the church was subdivided into small dwellings.⁷² In most cases, there are signs of limited habitation on the ruins of the destroyed cities and followed by a total abandonment. To the south, Athens and Argos survived after their destruction by the invading Slavs, but in very much reduced and impoverished form.⁷³

Archaeological investigation has also modified the old picture of the profound decline of the cities in North Africa and most scholars now agree that the fourth century was a period of prosperity in the area. However, opinion is divided in regard to the later centuries. The period of Vandal occupation has been viewed either as a period of continuity in urban institutions or as a period of crisis for the municipal life. The question of how far various aspects of ancient urbanism continued into the early Middle Ages has also been raised.⁷⁴ The overall picture that emerges from archaeological sites in North Africa is that of a gradual transformation of urban centres from the fourth to the sixth centuries. In this process of gradual transformation, scholars have particularly stressed the role of the Church. In their view, the archaeological evidence indicates that not even the Vandal invasion was enough to disrupt city life in North Africa and that it was the Arab conquest in the seventh century that caused the decisive rupture in North African urbanism.⁷⁵ Egypt and its cities remained little investigated, except by pa-

⁶⁹ *See infra*, pp. 455-456, Kondic and Popović, *Cvetin Grad*, 372 ff.

⁷⁰ Wilmann, *The City*, 396-313.

⁷¹ Lemerle, *Philippi*, 113-118; Ch. Bakirtz, *Théophraste (Théophraste) et les invasions barbares*, *Kathimerini* 200, 695-700; O. Paud, *Témoins de civilisation monétaire à Thasos du IV^e au VII^e siècle après J.-C.*, *Thasos. BCH Suppl. V* (Athens and Paris 1979), 452; Fr. Blondel, A. Müller and D. Malliez, *Une nouvelle place publique à Thasos. Les archéologues du passage des Thésiens de l'époque paléochrétienne. Revue archéologique* 1987.1, 38-39; Ch. Bakirtz, *Théophraste. Témoins de civilisation monétaire*, *op. cit.*, p. 39, in *État des lieux de l'Égypte. E. Méliani* 3 (Athens 1989), 330-341; *Ibid.*, *The End of Antiquity in Eastern Macedonia*, *Antiqua Macedonia* 6 (1990), 123-128.

⁷² Soteriou, *Thessalonica*, 8-9.

⁷³ *Fronte, The Athenian Agora*, 117-122; Abadie-Reynal, *Agora*, 397-404, esp. 399 ff.; Spitzer, *La ville*, 325-330.

⁷⁴ *Fronte, Permanence et héritage*, 267-284.

⁷⁵ Y. Thebert, *L'évolution urbaine dans les provinces orientales de l'Afrique romaine tardive. Opus 2* (1985), 96-131; for a reconsideration of the impact of the Vandal invasion see Kondic and Kondic, *Quelques problèmes*, 182-184. However, on

Time and again the vital contribution of archaeological material into the study of early Byzantine cities has been recognised. Ironically, this may be the only area in which Byzantine studies appear to have advanced faster than classical studies.⁵⁴ A major contribution made by archaeological investigation is the change in scholarly perceptions of the demographic development in Late Antiquity. Today, the empire-wide picture that emerges from the totality of the archaeological reports is that of an increase in population until the plague of the middle of the sixth century and of a subsequent economic stagnation, which is evident everywhere, but the degree of which varies from one region to another. The final collapse of urban centres coincided in the Balkans with the invasion by the Slavs in the second half of the sixth century and in the eastern provinces with the Arab invasions of the seventh century.

Haldon in his *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The transformation of a culture* (Cambridge and New York 1990) considered the fate of Byzantine cities in the seventh century in the context of administrative and socio-economic changes and military events. By the seventh century Byzantine cities had lost their administrative, financial and fiscal independence and their role in the state had radically changed. "the structural and functional position of the 'city' in the totality of social and economic relationships of the late Roman state was changing and that it was these changes in function which lie at the heart of any development – whether of decline or continuity – in the history of the seventh- and early eighth-century city".⁵⁵ Without doubt such changes affected the public sector in areas such as construction and maintenance of public monuments in the cities. Of course the crisis was deeper and it is evident also in the poor material remains left by the private sector. The new position of the cities vis-à-vis the state may not have affected the economy and prosperity of the private sector to the same degree or even in the same way. Thus Haldon remarks that "of course, this gradual reduction in the relevance of the cities to the fiscal and political administration of the state did not always have negative effects on local economic activity, whether small-scale artisan production, services or market exchange".⁵⁶ In any discussion regarding cities in the sixth and seventh centuries population decline is a crucial issue. Haldon acknowledges that it is difficult to assess the degree of the population decline in Byzantine cities in the seventh century, and he stresses that in any case "demographic decline is not the cause of urban decline, even if it does have an effect when it takes place".⁵⁷ He also appears to agree with the generally held view that earthquakes and plagues played a role in the decline of the cities.⁵⁸ However, in Haldon's view, it was above all the constant enemy invasions in the seventh century which precipitated the end of the ancient cities of Asia Minor and the Balkans.⁵⁹

M. Whitton, in his paper "Ruling the Late Roman and Early Byzantine City: A Continuous History" (1980), takes a different position. Although Whitton rightly acknowledges cultural transformation as a factor in the physical appearance of cities, he argues for a flourishing urban life well into the seventh century: the administrative changes were merely institutional and did not affect the continuous prosperity of the cities. Whitton points to the fact that urban elites continued to rule the cities, although they no longer held the same administrative functions.

The flood of evidence from archaeological excavations placing the beginning of the urban crisis in the middle of the sixth century, before the enemy invasions, produced a renewed interest in the sixth

century. Apart from the works of Cameron on literary and cultural themes of the sixth century, the collective volume *The Sixth Century: End or Beginning?*, edited by P. Allen and E. Jeffreys (1996) includes studies most of which deal with the written sources. Two contributions, however, investigate evidence of climatic change in the sixth century. The scientific indications of cooling and aridity in the first half of the sixth century, which would have had consequences for harvest and caused famine, are confirmed by information given by the literary sources. These climate changes will have affected the empire's population and may have forced migrations from the East to the Mediterranean area.⁶⁰ No doubt climatic change, devastating earthquakes, the recurring plague and invasions, when combined, had a cumulative effect on the cities, weakened the empire, and hastened the transformation of the city from its ancient form to a new, mediaeval manifestation, a process, albeit slow, that was already in motion in the fourth century.

Over recent years, there has been notable interest in ideological trends underlying urban change. A. Wharton, in *Reforging the Post-Classical City: From Europe, to Jerusalem and Ravenna* (Cambridge 1995), examines some monuments from an art historian's perspective and also considers the reaction of today's observer towards Byzantine art and architecture. The collective volume edited by G. P. Brogiolo and B. Ward Perkins, *The Idea and Ideal of the Town between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden 1999), focuses on ideological trends and concepts of the city in a broad context embracing history and archaeology. Two monographs, both major synthetic works, have recently been added to the rapidly increasing bibliography on the late antique cities, namely the books of J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (Oxford 2001) and R. Alston, *The City in Roman and Byzantine Egypt* (London and New York 2002). Both make great contributions to the knowledge of early Byzantine urbanism and combine archaeological and literary evidence to offer reconsiderations of specific issues in urban history. Their perspective is broad and the treatment of the subject detailed. Liebeschuetz's book utilizes various sources, archaeological material, papyri, legislation and inscriptions. The book's principal theme is political change; he stresses that the end of the curial government weakened the cities and marked the end of the cities' self-determination. The administration by the bishop and the wealthier members of the urban communities, and the increasing control of the provincial governors brought about the decline of the ancient city. It also led to the emancipation of the countryside. Liebeschuetz stresses that urban decline took various forms – the dissolution of classical monumentality, the shrinking of cities, their dissolution into smaller units around churches and ultimately their retreat to naturally defended sites. It is significant that in a book on the city Liebeschuetz includes a chapter on the countryside. He recognizes the "greater prominence of villages" in Late Antiquity and he concludes that the villages followed the prosperity and decline of the cities.⁶¹ The book includes chapters on the administrative role of the bishop, civic finance, shows and factions, and the transformation of Greek literature and culture under the influence of Christianity. The perspective of the book is extremely broad, for it includes urban developments in both the East and the West. The author reaches the conclusion that "the most important factor of the decline of the classical city was the running

⁵⁴ As A. M. Snodgrass remarks, "For well over a hundred years, people studied the Greek city as an entity without making more than negligible use of archaeological evidence". Archaeology and the study of the Greek city, in Rich and Wallace-Hadrill, *Cities*, 1.

⁵⁵ Haldon, *Byzantium*, 95; Alston, *Some Considerations*, 86–90; Brundage and Haldon, *Towns*, esp. 143–151.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 111–112.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 103–105.

⁵⁹ P. Pargadzev, *Byzantium, Planet Earth and the Solar System*, 263–268; J. Kaldor, *Climate Change in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries?*, 270–285; Whetton, *The City*, 312–313. For the Near East the opinions are divided. Some suggest that there was no climatic change in the region; B. Rubin, *The Debate over Climatic Changes in the Near East, Fourth–Seventh Centuries C.E.*, *PEQ* 121 (1989), 71–78. For a sudden climatic change in the year 536 see J. D. Gigg, *A.D. 536 and its 500-year aftermath*, in *Idem* (ed.), *The Town without Summer. Drowning A.D. 536 and its aftermath* (Oxford 2000), 9–20; *Idem*, *Changes in power: City in Europe*, *ibid.*, 21–24; B. K. Young, *Climate and Crisis in Sixth-Century Italy and Gaul*, *ibid.*, 29–42.

⁶⁰ Liebeschuetz, *Decline*, 63 ff., 408.

down of the Empire".¹⁴ One of the most interesting chapters is that on the economy. Liebeschuetz agrees with what the results of archaeological investigation imply, namely that, overall, early Byzantine cities continued to prosper economically in the sixth century. He draws attention, however, to some evidence indicating a decline in coin circulation as early as the sixth century in a few restricted urban districts.¹⁵ Coin evidence also underlines the trend towards regional economy.¹⁶ Liebeschuetz advances a broad range of potential causes of urban stagnation and ultimate decline from the second half of the sixth century – administrative changes, economic and population decline,¹⁷ natural disasters, such as the plague, earthquakes and climatic changes, and, most important of all, the disintegration of the empire. The impact of the Christianization of the empire on the dissolution of the urban space is not developed separately, however, except for the administrative role of the bishop. Liebeschuetz argues that the crisis struck the cities in Anatolia, which collapsed in the seventh century, more severely than those in the Middle East, which continued to flourish because of the high level of economic development of the area.¹⁸

R. Ashton, in his book *The City in Roman and Byzantine Egypt* (2002), focuses on urban space, houses, streets and neighbourhoods, the administration and civic finances, temples and their economic functions, the Romanisation of urban architecture, the third-century crisis, the Christian city and the urban economy. Ashton shows that the papyri indicate an increase in the number and economic growth of villages in the early Byzantine period.¹⁹ Thus papyrological evidence confirms the archaeological picture of increasingly prosperous village communities over the fourth to the sixth centuries. The author concludes that in Egypt cities declined at some point between the sixth and the ninth centuries and that some cities were abandoned. The causes of the decline were various. Plagues, earthquakes, famine and wars would not have produced a long-lasting urban decline, for cities usually recover afterwards. However, he suggests that recurring bubonic plague caused a substantial decline in the population. The author concludes that "the decline of the ancient city is, therefore, intimately related to a change in culture, one which undermined the carefully constructed sense of difference that had been integral to the Roman and early Byzantine city".²⁰

W. Bowden, in his book *Epirus Veneta: The Archaeology of a Late Antique Province* (London 2003), which covers western Greece and southern Albania, gives the point of view of an archaeologist who also draws historical conclusions. Employing the archaeological evidence he explores various rural settlements and economy with emphasis on villas, church construction and the economic forces behind it, the Christian city and its architectural environment, Christian ideology and the militarization of cities. Socio-economic and cultural and ideological trends explain urban change. Emphasis is placed on construction materials and the use of *spolia*. In a separate chapter, entitled *Low-mural Residential Building*, Bowden is the first to give proper consideration to the poor early Byzantine structures designated in the past as "squatters' occupation". Bowden also examines the preferred building techniques of the period and offers explanations as to why they are used. The relocation of cities to new sites, the new urban ideology and the cities' weakening position on account of environmental factors and their collapse during the barbaric invasions are the subjects of the final chapters of the book.

¹⁴ Ibid., 410–411. See also the similar thoughts of Rugg, *New research*, 147.

¹⁵ Liebeschuetz, *Decline*, 43–46.

¹⁶ Ibid., 47–49.

¹⁷ Ibid., 43–44.

¹⁸ Ibid., 42–43, 414.

¹⁹ Ashton, *The City*, 354–360; Liebeschuetz, *Late Late Antiquity*, 53.

²⁰ Ashton, *The City*, 367.

M. Whitton recently slightly modified his earlier view that cities flourished continuously after the middle of the sixth century. It involved "not a general decline but an urban recession brought on by the plague, by a growing focus on Constantinople, by a tendency for traditional civic cities to give way to ecclesiastical and imperial office-holders, and possibly, too, by the continued high expenditure on warfare. This was not a prelude to a collapse brought on by Persians and Arabs, but a process of adjustment within a fundamentally prosperous economy... there is nothing in the evidence... to suggest that without the wars and invasions in the 7th c., W. Asia Minor would not otherwise have recovered to match the prosperity of contemporary Egypt or Iraq".²¹

We now turn to look at recent advances in scholarship in two major issues directly related to urban prosperity and decline, namely, population increase and decline in urban and rural settlements, and the development of the economy. It is in this context that we examine the transformation of the urban landscape in this study. Economic prosperity brought about the growth of many cities, observed Libanius.²² Recent scholarly works now accept as an established fact that the period of Late Antiquity was a period of prosperity. Recently C. Foss made a clear statement, which would have been unthinkable for scholars a few decades earlier, that, "late antiquity was plainly a thriving period, whose prosperity culminated in the late fifth and early sixth centuries".²³ The picture that the literary sources draw, of villagers oppressed by famine, epidemic diseases and heavy taxation, abused by powerful patrons and abandoning their fields does not correspond to the archaeological evidence from all the areas of the empire, with the exception of Thrace.²⁴ Recent studies have repeatedly shown that in the early Byzantine empire peasant communities prospered, free peasants became economically independent vis-à-vis their powerful landlords and the system of land exploitation known as *emphyteusis* strengthened the peasants' position.²⁵ The change in terminology regarding rural settlements also suggests the increasing socio-economic importance of village communities. While in the past, the term *chorion* was used to indicate a holding or an estate, and *kome* a rural settlement, even before the sixth century, the term *chorion* was increasingly used for a village.²⁶ Also, with the disintegration of the Roman institutions, the decline of the Roman type of land exploitation through the villa resulted in the increase of independent rural communities.²⁷ The rate of decline of villas varied from one region to another, depend-

²¹ Whitton, *Recent research*, 151; *idem*, *Decline and Fall*, 407–408.

²² Or. LXIV.8 (IV, 426.1–3): οὐ δὲ πανταχοῦς κοιλὰς ἐφ' ἑσπέρῃ νόσῳ καὶ κοιλῇ ἐσθλὴν καὶ ἀσθενὴν ἔλασαν ἡσυχίᾳ καὶ ἡσυχίᾳ.

²³ Foss, *Syria*, 201.

²⁴ Pallagium, *Pauperté*, 303–306; Dagron, *Entre village*, 37–38; Tate, *Campagnes*; Foss, *Syria*, *idem*, *The Near Eastern countryside in late antiquity: a review article*, *JRA* suppl. 14 (1995), 213–234; Salza, *Economy*, 438–442; Lewis, *Agricultural Production*, 48–49, 65–88; B. Ward-Perkins, *Specialisation, Trade, and Prosperity: an Overview of the Economy of the Late Antique Eastern Mediterranean*, in Kingley and Decker, *Economy*, 167–178; Kingley, *Late Antique Trade*; Whitton, *Decline and Fall*, 405–406; W. Bowden and L. Lavan, *The Late Antique Countryside: an Introduction*, in *LAA* 2 (2004), XXX–XXXV; A. Chavarría and T. Lewit, *Archaeological Research on the Late Antique Countryside: a Bibliographic Essay*, *LAA* 2 (2004), 16–21.

²⁵ Pallagium, *Pauperté*, 236 ff., 246; Haldon, *Byzantium*, 132 ff.; Kaplan, *Les hommes*, 135 ff., 181–183.

²⁶ Pallagium, *Pauperté*, 241–242; M. Kaplan, *Les villages ont-ils vraiment été byzantins (V^{ème}–X^{ème} siècles): une société homogène?*, *BCH* 43 (1982), 202–217, esp. 202–204; Brandes and Haldon, *Towns*, 149–150.

²⁷ Ph. Leveau, *Campagnes de Massaliote: Une ville romaine et ses campagnes* (Paris: Parisot 1984), 485, 503; G. Ripoll and J. Aroz, *The Transformation and End of Roman Villas in the West (Fourth–Seventh Centuries): Problems and Perspectives*, in G. P. Brogiolo, N. Gauthier and N. Christie (eds.), *Towns and their Territories between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden, Boston, Köln 2000), 63–114; P. Arthur, *From Villas to Villages: Italian Landscapes AD 400–1000*, in Christie, *Landscapes*, 103–133. Free landless peasants (*gropes*) also worked in the large estates; they roamed there; they were paid a

ing on local conditions. In Epirus Vetus, there is evidence that some villae were abandoned early, while a few survived and continued to function in Late Antiquity.¹⁰⁶ In Thrace, the medium size villae were destroyed in the last quarter of the fourth century in the Gothic invasions (376–382), while the few that survived increased in size. There the villages also suffered depopulation, but they were revitalized by the Gothic *foderati* who settled in the region.¹⁰⁷ Further south, in Greece, in Boeotia and around Patras in Achaea, villae declined in the early Byzantine period and were replaced by rural settlements.¹⁰⁸ However, archaeological evidence from other regions of Greece gives a totally different picture. For example, in Crete in the plain of Messara, villae are found dated, albeit not with absolute certainty, to the late fifth and sixth centuries and have been interpreted as evidence of prosperous landowners. At the same time, or perhaps later, villages appeared in the coastal plains.¹⁰⁹ In the Corinthia, also, a few villae have been identified which developed significantly in the sixth century. Located in areas accessible from the city, they give the impression that their wealthy owners did not actually want to break contacts with the urban centre.¹¹⁰ Opinions are divided regarding the prosperity of the countryside in Italy during Late Antiquity. Archaeological excavations suggest an economic expansion in the countryside and prosperity of agriculture, although some scholars question the evidence.¹¹¹

The vitality of the rural economy depended on nearby cities, for the latter offered the markets for peasants' produce. For their part, the cities depended on the countryside, which provided the goods necessary for their prosperity. In Libanius's words, the countryside was the foundation (*ô brachylogos*) of the cities.¹¹² The economy of the rural communities was based mainly on agriculture, but industrial activities – stone cutting, pottery production, metalworking and textile industry – are also attested in large villages (*kōmas*) in some districts and they appear to increase in the early Byzantine period. Their large-scale production suggests that they were manufactured in the service of a great landlord. In Greece industrial activities in the countryside multiply from the fourth to the sixth century.¹¹³ In Palestinian villages, archaeological remains have been found of large-scale production of glass and pottery.¹¹⁴ Given

that cities did not decline until the latter part of the sixth century, this presence of artisans in the countryside would seem to be an indication of rural prosperity, rather than indicating any flight by artisans from the city to countryside for economic reasons, as was the case in the West.¹¹⁵ In the Balkans, the inhabitants of small, fortified settlements were engaged in industrial and agricultural activities. Gornograd, in the province of Dacia Ripensis, a luxurious fortified mansion built to serve as imperial residence, lost its original function in the end of the fourth century and became a settlement with artisanal and agricultural activities. In Bulgaria, the small, fortified settlement at Golemanovo Kale near Sadovetz is another example of such a change of function (Plan II).¹¹⁶

With the exception of the northern Balkans, the vestiges of rural communities reveal a flourishing countryside in the early Byzantine period, unprecedented in the ancient world. Of course, the intensity of the development varied from one province to another. The evidence from Palestine and Syria is abundant and offers a clear picture of the diverse and distinct factors, which were the dynamics of this prosperity. The traditional view that from the third century onwards the empire suffered constant decline and depopulation is no longer accepted. As early as the 1960's, P. Charanis showed that after a decline in population until the end of the fourth century there followed a period of demographic increase until the middle of the sixth century. The plague was the major factor in halting this trend in the middle of the sixth century and invasions that followed immediately afterwards accelerated a new process of decline.¹¹⁷ The role of invasion in drastically reducing the urban population should also not be underestimated. A dramatic demographic decline is attested for the Italian cities after the fourth century because of the invasions. Calculations based on figures of distribution of the *annona* in Rome and on other evidence show that the population of Rome declined from 800,000 inhabitants in the fourth century, a number stable for a few centuries, to 60,000 in 530.¹¹⁸

Numerous studies have shown a great increase in population in various types of settlements in different districts of the Byzantine empire from the fourth to the sixth century, with the exception of the areas of the northern Balkans, which were devastated by invasions. Archaeological survey is the method used to identify settlement patterns and demographic trends in broad historical periods.¹¹⁹ The greatest development of settlements in terms of increase in size and number in the early Byzantine period appears in the Middle East, where in some areas the number of settlements doubled in the early Byzantine period.¹²⁰ Construction of churches and monasteries, and mosaic pavements have also been used as an

salary in kind and owned livestock. J. Bursi, *Agrarian History and the Labour Organisation of Byzantine Large Estates*, in A. K. Bowman and E. Rieu (eds.), *Agriculture in Egypt from Pharaonic to Modern Times* (Oxford 1999), 193–216.

¹⁰⁶ Bowdler, *Epirus Vetus*, 60–67.
¹⁰⁷ V. Velkov, *Les campagnes et la population rurale en Thrace au IV^e–VI^e siècle*, *Bulg. J.* (1962), 50–55; Poulter, *Urbanism*, 121–122; idem, *Catalanym on the Lower Danube: The Destruction of a Complex Roman Landscape*, in Christie, *Landscape*, 223–253; Curtis, *Peasants*, 295; K. Randsborg, *Between Classical antiquity and the Middle Ages: new evidence of economic change*, *Antiquity* 64 (1990), 122–127.

¹⁰⁸ J. Bintliff and A. Snodgrass, *The End of the Roman Countryside: A View from the East*, in R. F. Jones et al. (eds.), *First Millennium Papers: Western Europe in the First Millennium AD* (BAR Int. Series 401, Oxford 1988), 175–217, esp. 212; M. Petropoulos, *Antiquities in the East*, in P. N. Doukellis and L. G. Merdoni (eds.), *Structures rurales et sociétés antiques. Actes du colloque de Corfu* (14–16 mai 1992) (Paris 1994), 405–424.

¹⁰⁹ I. F. Sanders, *Roman Crete. An Archaeological Survey and Gazetteer of Late Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine Crete* (Warminster 1982), 20–24, 30.

¹¹⁰ T. E. Gregory, *An Early Byzantine Complex at Akra Sophia near Corinth*, *Hesperia* 54 (1985), 411–428; Rothaus, *Corinth*, 26–30.

¹¹¹ F. De Robertis, *La produzione agricola in Italia dalla crisi del III secolo all'età dei Carolingi*, *Annali Fac. Economia e Commercio*, Bari, n.s. 8 (1948); K. Hammett, *L'evoluzione delle risorse agricole dell'Italia dal IV al IX secolo d. C.* (Copenaghen 1962); Neri, *Villae*, 697. For a different view, namely a decline of agriculture in Italy see L. Cracco Ruggini, *Economia e società nell'Italia arcaica*, *Rapporti fra agricoltura e commercio dal IV al VI secolo d. C.* (Milan 1961).

¹¹² Libanius, *Or.* L.33 (III, 486.1–3).

¹¹³ S. E. Alcock, *Greco-Roman Egypt. The Landscapes of Roman Egypt* (Cambridge 1993), 102–105.

¹¹⁴ Libanius, *Or.* XI.230 (p. 517) states that the *kōmas* in the area of Antioch had developed economy similar to that of the cities with agriculture and trade. Sotiri, *L'urbanisme*, 113; Sotiri, *Economy*, 188–214, esp. 212, 352–354, 371–376; Tate, *Campagnes*, 249–251, 256; idem, *Les métiers dans les villages de la Syrie du Nord*, *Koine* 16 (1991) [1995], 73–78; Hirschfeld, *Farms*, 61.

Kingsley, *Wine Trade*, 45; Bagnall, *Egypt*, 127–130; Alston, *The City*, 336–337; Kurbatov, *Onomasticon*, 38–40; M. L. Rastman and M. C. McClellan, *Excavations at late Roman Koptos* (Oxford), *JEA* 5 (1902), 265–271, esp. 271.

¹¹⁵ A movement of craftsmen and manufacturers from the city to the countryside has been assumed for the area of Antioch in the sixth and seventh centuries, but the evidence is lacking: Liebeschuetz and Kennedy, *Antioch*, 87.

¹¹⁶ Faizant, *La ville*, 264–272; Berns, *Settlement*, 41.

¹¹⁷ P. Charanis, *Observations on the Demography of the Byzantine Empire, Proceedings of the XIIth Int. Congress of Byzantine Studies, Oxford, 5–10 September 1960* (London 1967), 445–463, esp. 453–455, 457.

¹¹⁸ J. Durliat, *De la ville antique à la ville byzantine. Le problème des suburbains* (Rome 1960), 90–123.

¹¹⁹ See, for example, J. Bintliff and A. Snodgrass, *Mediterranean survey and the city*, *Antiquity* 62 (1988), 57–71; Whitton, *Decline and Fall*, 406 and n. 9.

¹²⁰ Paillegan, *Peasants*, 310–311; Fr. Villeneuve, *Economie et société des villages de la montagne Haouzienne à l'époque romaine: l'apport des données archéologiques*, *AE* 43 (1977), 31–37; F. L. Gaster, *Villages du Proche-Orient préhistoriques* (Helm-Tenue s.), *Étude régionale, in King and Cameron, Land Use*, 17–40; Sotiri, *Economy*, 436–438; Hirschfeld, *Farms*, D. F. Graf, *Town and Countryside in Roman Arabia during Late Antiquity*, in Burns and Tadie, *Urban Context*, 225–240; C. Dauphin, *Les "Kōmas" de Palestine, Proche-Orient Christian* 37 (1987), 251–267, esp. 252–253; idem, *La Palestine* I, 77–121; M. Broshi, *The Population of Western Palestine in the Roman Byzantine Period*, *JASOR* 28 (1979), 1–10; Y. Tadmor, *Some Notes on the Settlement and Demography of Palestine in the Byzantine Period: The Archaeological Evidence*, in J. D. Noy (ed.), *Retrieving the Past: Essays on Archaeological Research and Methodology in Honour of G. W. Van Buren* (1996), 269–283, 28.

Lapin, *Economy, Geography, and Provincial History in Late Roman Palestine* (Tübingen 2001), 39 ff.

index of demographic increase and prosperity.¹²¹ In Palestine and Syria, the increase in farmland created the foundations for the economic development of new regions in the Roman and early Byzantine periods. There the introduction of extensive irrigation systems, water storage systems employing cisterns, and new terracing helped turn large uncultivated areas with harsh climatic conditions into fertile land. New methods of land exploitation achieved in the Roman imperial period also played a dominant role in the development of the area. In Syria and Palestine, the large-scale production of oil and wine created an unparalleled prosperity in the countryside,¹²² whose products were exported to international markets. The increase in agricultural production in turn must have created an increase in population in settlements of all sizes. The cities in the Negev in the province of Palaestina Tertia (Solutaria) in southern Israel constitute notable examples of this growth in agricultural production. The earlier Nabatean settlements in the desert between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of 'Aqabah were turned into towns in the Roman period upon the development of agriculture by means of sophisticated water management and the civic organization imposed by the Roman state.¹²³ With Petra as capital, the most important cities in the Negev were Mampsis, Nessana, Birsa, Elusa, Sobata (Shiwa) and Oboda.

In the Roman period, the establishment of the *limbanon* on the *limes* in the East was decisive for the urbanization of the Trans-Jordanian area.¹²⁴ The transition from a Roman military station into a civilian town is exemplified in the *kome* of Umm el-Jimal in Jordan, Roman station on the Via Nova Traiana, south of Bostra (today Bosra in Syria). The early Byzantine community replaced the earlier Roman settlement that had military and commercial functions. Umm el-Jimal had 150 houses, fifteen churches and an indigenous population. The economic activities of the inhabitants had a predominantly agricultural character.¹²⁵ The development of the rectangular fortified camp at Umm al-Rawas (Kastrom Mefaa), 40 km southeast of Mount Nebo in the steppe, was similar. In the early Byzantine period, it developed into a town with four churches inside the walls and ten outside.¹²⁶ There is no doubt that the presence of the army generated favourable conditions for the development of towns and cities in the area, and for the prosperity of agriculture and trade.¹²⁷

The prosperity of the rural settlements in the eastern provinces of the empire is evident both in the increase in the size and number of settlements and in the large-scale agricultural production and industrial activities, the imported fine ware found in villages¹²⁸ and the size of rural houses. Houses in

¹²¹ Pallaguer, *Pavement*, 211-213; C. Dauphin, *Mosaic Pavements as an Index of Prosperity and Fashion*, *Levant* 12 (1960), 112-124. Opposite view by Bowden, *Church Builders*.

¹²² Kingsley, *Wine Trade*; M. Decker, *Food for an Empire: Wine and Oil Production in North Syria*, in Kingsley and Decker, *Economy*, 45-46.

¹²³ R. Rabin, *Urbanization, Settlement and Agriculture in the Negev Desert - The Impact of the Roman-Byzantine Empire on the Frontier*, *ZDPV* 112 (1996), 49-60; J. P. Gascot, *The Origins and Design of Nabatean Water-Supply Systems*, in *Jordan V*, 707-719; W. H. Mare, *The Technology of the Hydraulic System at Ajlun of the Decapolis*, *ibid.*, 727-736.

¹²⁴ M. Piccirillo, *Rural Settlements in Byzantine Jordan*, in *Jordan II*, 225-261. For indications of population increase in Jordan see, for example, G. King, *Preliminary Report on a Survey of Byzantine and Islamic Sites in Jordan*, 42/47 26 (1962), 45-65; *idem*, et al., *Survey of Byzantine and Islamic Sites in Jordan*, Second Season Report, 1961, 27 (1963), 385-434; *idem*, *Survey of Byzantine and Islamic Sites in Jordan*, Third Season Report (1962), *The Wall: Arabah* (Part 2), 33 (1969), 199-215.

¹²⁵ B. de Vries, *Umm el-Jimal. A Frontier Town and its Landscape in Northern Jordan I. Fieldwork 1972-1981* (JRA Suppl. 26, Portsmouth, Rhode Island 1998), 220-231, 239.

¹²⁶ M. Piccirillo, *L'identificazione storica di Umm al-Rawas con Mefaa*, in Piccirillo and Alliata, *Umm al-Rawas*, 37-46; J. Bujard and M. Joppin, *La fortification de Kastrom Mefaa (Umm al-Rawas)*, in *Jordan V*, 241-249.

¹²⁷ Kingsley and Decker, *Exchange*, 6-9; *Safari, Economy*, 454-457.

¹²⁸ Kingsley, *Wine Trade*, 58; *idem*, *Late Antique Trade*, 116-120.

villages gradually expanded and became more complex, acquiring new residential units, storerooms and barns.¹²⁹ This development in peasant housing suggests an increase in family members and consequently an improvement in their economic situation.

The factors behind this economic growth in the provinces of the Middle East were several. The importance of the area for Christians attracted the investment of funds in the construction of churches and monasteries. Roman aristocrats who settled there because of the collapse of the Roman state in the fifth century and the pilgrims visiting the Holy Land gave a boost to the economy of the area, thus creating more favourable conditions for population increase. It is generally accepted that for the area of Roman Palestine Christianity was a major factor in economic prosperity, since funds were attracted for pious foundations in the Holy Land and the numerous pilgrims who visited them generated related industry and trade.¹³⁰ The sedentarization of Arabs may also have played a role in the expansion of village communities in the Trans-Jordanian area.¹³¹ Northern Syria enjoyed unprecedented development from the fourth to the sixth centuries. Most striking are the villages on the limestone hills east of Antioch, the economy of which depended on the city's vitality. The remains of the Syrian villages, whose exceptional state of preservation is due to the fact that they have never been dismantled to supply building material for new buildings, are spectacular. The development of the Syrian countryside began in the first century A.D., with the establishment in the area of Roman veterans. The Roman occupation created favourable conditions for the economic development of the area. Uncultivated land was exploited and an irrigation system was established. The villages exported the surplus of their agricultural produce to the large urban centres of the area.¹³² The spectacular demographic and economic expansion of the region began in the fourth century and reached its peak in the late fifth century. The number and size of houses increased, and the quality of the construction material and decoration gradually improved. From the middle of the sixth century, however, the houses cease to expand, which suggests the onset of economic stagnation. In the seventh century, the economy apparently deteriorated yet further. There was no new construction activity. Instead, old houses were maintained, although living conditions deteriorated. Rubble and dirt accumulated, forming new floors, whilst rooms were subdivided to house more people. The old view, however, which rests solely on archaeological surveys, that the villages were abandoned in the seventh century because of the Persian and Arab invasions is no longer accepted.¹³³ Excavations in the village of Dehes showed, contrary to expectation, that it was not evacuated in the seventh century. Furthermore, unlike the cities, which suffered depopulation, population of the villages remained the same or perhaps increased. Substantial economic activity continued and small

¹²⁹ Y. Hirschfeld, *The Palestinian Dwelling in the Roman-Byzantine Period* (Jerusalem 1995), 50 ff.; Sodini, *Habitat* (1997), 481 ff.

¹³⁰ Dauphin, *La Palestine I*, 120-121; M. Avi-Yonah, *The Economics of Byzantine Palestine*, *IEJ* 8 (1958), 39-51.

¹³¹ J. Finkbeiner and A. Perovskitsky, *Process of Sedentarization and Nomadization in the History of Sinai and the Negev*, *BASOR* 279 (1996), 67-88; M. Haiman, *Agriculture and Nomad-State Relations in the Negev Desert in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods*, *BASOR* 297 (1995), 29-53.

¹³² I. Peña, P. Castella and R. Fernández, *Investigación del Jebel El-A' la Recherche archéologique dans la région des Villages Mores de la Syrie du Nord* (Jerusalem 1990), 15 ff.; G. T. - *Stabilité des économies antiques: l'exemple de la Syrie du Nord (IV^e-VI^e siècles)*, in P.-L. Gauthier et al. (eds.), *Géographie historique au Proche-Orient (Syrie, Phénicie, Arabie, grecques, romaines, byzantines)*, Actes de la Table Ronde de Valbonne, 16-18 septembre 1985 (Paris 1988), 249-256.

¹³³ G. Tchalenko, *Villages antiques de la Syrie du Nord. Le massif du Belus à l'époque romaine*, 3 vols. (Paris 1953-58); M. Robinson, *De l'archéologie à la sociologie historique. Notes méthodologiques sur le dernier ouvrage de G. Tchalenko*, *Syria* 39 (1961), 170-200; esp. 192 ff.; J. Matter, *À travers les villes mores de haute Syrie* (Beirut 1933), 139 suggested that the reasons of the villages' decline was deforestation and erosion, a view rejected by Tchalenko (p. 63). Liebenow and Kennedy, *Antioch*, 65-96, esp. pp. 68, 87 interpreted the phenomenon as a result of the plague of 542. See also Kennedy, *The Last Century*, 161.

areas for many centuries. Climatic changes may have played a role, but above all demographic decline because of invasions and political instability were the reasons for the decline.¹⁶⁶ In Cyprus, surveys from the areas of Pafos, the Akamas peninsula and Chrysochou Bay area, all in western Cyprus, show a decline in the late sixth century, while in northern and southern Cyprus prosperity continues well into the seventh century and ends in the middle of the century.¹⁶⁷ The settlement of Kopeika in the Vasilika valley in south-central Cyprus, located between mountains and the sea, is a good example. The economy of the area was based on agriculture and industry. It was founded in the middle of the sixth century and enjoyed prosperity until the middle of the next century, when it suffered damage from Arab raids. The site was not abandoned, but it diminished in size and material life deteriorated. On the ruins of the three early Byzantine basilicas small chapels were constructed, and houses were subdivided. This last phase ended in the eighth century when the site was abandoned.¹⁶⁸

Legislative and literary sources show that from the middle of the seventh century the economy moved on villages, instead of cities.¹⁶⁹ Archaeology confirms the view that in several areas of the empire the countryside continued to enjoy relative prosperity during the Byzantine Dark Ages, while cities shrank, their population was dramatically reduced and the economy was in decline. We have already mentioned that in the seventh and eighth centuries the villages in northern Syria engaged in substantial economic activities and the population increased a fair amount. In the provinces of Palestine and Arabia, inscriptions at rural sites recording building projects from the late sixth until the middle of the eighth century (573-747) are double than those found in the cities.¹⁷⁰ Urban life deteriorated in Gerasa, while the villages Ribah and es-Samra, at a distance of 25 km, flourished and new churches were built after the reign of Justinian. The unprecedented prosperity of the area around Jordan river from the second half of the sixth century has been interpreted variously. I. Shihbi pointed to the diversion of trade routes from the Mesopotamian to the west Arabian route passing west of Jordan river. I. di Segni considers it an indication that inhabitants were leaving the declining cities for the villages, whilst others suggest the building activity in the villages and towns west of the river Jordan was sponsored by the Arab *federati*, the Ghassanids, who founded churches, monasteries and public buildings in these provinces.¹⁷¹ It is now certain that villages there enjoyed a relatively flourishing economy, while most cities suffered depopulation and economic decline.¹⁷² Further to the east, Petra declined in the early

¹⁶⁶ *A Great Countryside: The Southern Argolid from Prehistory to the Present Day* (Stanford 1994), 400-404; Averantzis, *La Préhistoire*, 50, 116-117, 141, 1. Bintliff, 'The two transitions: Current research on the origins of the traditional village in central Greece', in J. Bintliff and H. H. Hurrell (eds.), *Europe Between East, Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Recent archaeological and historical research in Western and Southern Europe* (BAR Int. Series 617, Oxford 1995), 111-130, esp. 113.

¹⁶⁷ J. Koder, 'Historical aspects of a reconquest of unknown land at the end of the late antiquity in the east Mediterranean, *Potlidiolomochos/Potlidiolomochos* Research 10 (1994), 177-187; Bowden, *Epoca Visigothica*, 114-126. For the area of Antioch it has been suggested that the widely spread small settlements in the highlands, away from the old city, caused environmental changes, erosion, flooding and sedimentation of the Orontes and expansion of the lake of Antioch. J. Cassin, 'The Archaeological Landscape of Late Roman Antioch', in Sandwell and Hunkeler, *Antioch*, 102-125, esp. 120-121.

¹⁶⁸ M. K. Rostovtzev, 'Villages in Late Roman Cyprus', *JAA 2* (1984), 109-218.

¹⁶⁹ M. C. McCluskey and M. L. Rostovtzev, 'The 1991 Field Season at Kalavassos-Kyrenia, RDAC 1994', 306-307.

¹⁷⁰ Hadden, 'Some Considerations', 85; also, Rostovtzev, 132 ff.

¹⁷¹ Di Segni, 'Epigraphic documentation', 163, 164-167. For a survey of settlements and their increase in this area see H. I. MacAdam, 'Settlement and Settlement Patterns in Northern and Central Transjordan', ca. 550-ca. 750, in King and Cameron, *Land Use*, 49-93.

¹⁷² I. Shihbi, 'The Arabs in the Pagan Town of A.D. 561', *Antich 3* (1996), 101-213; Di Segni, 'Epigraphic documentation', 165; I. Shihbi, *Arabians and the Arabs in the Sixth Century* 1.1 and 1.2 (Washington, D.C. 1995), 228-229, 301, 697-698, 824 ff. and *passim*.

¹⁷³ Barakat, 'The transformation', 390; H. Karamy, 'The Impact of Muslim Rule on the Pattern of Rural Settlement in Syria', in F. Caumont and J.-P. Ray-Cougnon (eds.), *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam VII-VIII siècles* (Damas 1992), 291-297.

Islamic period, while the smaller towns and large villages of the area survived.¹⁷³ This, of course, does not mean that the Arab invasions did not affect the population of many districts and their prosperity. In the area of Israel and today's occupied territories (which constitute what were the three provinces of Byzantine Palestine) archaeology indicates that there was significant decline of all settlements from the period of the Arab conquest of 636 to the occupation of Syria by the Fatimids in 976. In the Arab period the number of sites declines. Some districts show a decline of 50% of the number of sites between the Byzantine and the early Arab period, caused by the Arab invasions.¹⁷⁴

Archaeological evidence reveals similar pattern in areas of Asia Minor. In Lycia, which had a long tradition of stonecutting, there is a notable decline in construction materials in urban centres. However, the ancient technique was preserved in upland villages, after the decline of the cities. It is clear that in the Byzantine Dark Ages masons and sculptors moved to the countryside.¹⁷⁵ When early Byzantine cities were declining, in Lycia, lowland cities were transferred to smaller higher sites naturally defended.¹⁷⁶ In Pisidia, however, the population of some cities moved to villages in lower plains. Sagalassos, after it was abandoned by its inhabitants in the middle of the seventh century after a devastating earthquake, probably moved to the lower site of the modern village of Aghassos. At the same time the number of settlements on hill or mountain tops around Sagalassos increases. There villages prospered after the middle of the sixth century, while the city of Sagalassos declined. The town of Ariassos appears to have moved to the plain below, probably to the site of Bademajac.¹⁷⁷ Numismatic evidence also points in the same direction. In the sixth century, finds of coins decline dramatically in cities in Thrace that suffered invasion, as was the case with Nicopolis and Iatrus, although coins continued to circulate in hill top forts in the area, such as Golemanovo Kale and Sardovski Kale.¹⁷⁸ Frontier cities like Nicopolis became military settlements, with very little civilian population and with the army units stationed there paying in kind (*annona*). The shift to fortified settlements pursuing some monetary activities occurred earlier in the northern Balkans. The militarization of some districts through the settlement of peasants-soldiers helped the prosperity of the countryside, since funds from the cities were directed to support the landed militia.¹⁷⁹ In the East, as we have already stated, coins continued to circulate in Dehon in Syria, although economic activities dramatically declined in the cities of the region. In Asia Minor, in the town of Alisar Höyük in Cappadocia, after the reign of Heraclius no coins dated to the next 600 years have been found, although numerous coins were circulating in the surrounding area. Life continued in the villages, however, after the town was destroyed during the Persian invasion. In rural sites around Sagalassos in Pisidia, production activities increase from the second half of the sixth century, when the city was in a profound crisis.¹⁸⁰ Further to the northeast, in southwestern Crimea, villages flourished in the seventh century.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁴ Fiema, 'Late antique Petra', 209-213, 227, 241; also, Byzantine Petra - A Renaissance, in Burns and Eadie, *Urban Centres*, 121-122.

¹⁷⁵ Dagblom, *La Préhistoire* II, 351 ff., 351-372.

¹⁷⁶ Harrison, Lycia, 223-228.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Vashnitcher et al., Sagalassos, 259 and graphs 1, 2, pp. 267, 272; T. H. Robinson, 'The Decline of Urban Settlement in Pisidia - From City to Village?', in Demoen, *The Great City*, 57-108.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ A. Dams, 'Continuity and Change in the Macedonian Countryside from Galliana to Justinian', *JAA 2* (1984), 535-586.

¹⁸¹ Vashnitcher et al., Sagalassos, 262, 267; also Whitton, 'Recent research', 151-152 points to the continuous prosperity of villages in Asia Minor, in contrast to the urban decline in the sixth century.

¹⁸² Greenon, *Byzantine Coins*, 8-9; Whitton, 'Decline and Fall', 411-412; A. Jakobson, *Russkoe nasledstvo i sovetskaya politika* (Leningrad 1970), 181.

Of relevance to the question of the causes of urban decline are the unprecedented natural calamities that occurred over the sixth century. Scholars have seriously considered droughts, famine, earthquakes and epidemic disease to have been possible major factors that contributed to economic stagnation from the middle of the sixth century, when urban decline begins. The process was accelerated immediately after the middle of the sixth century by the invasions of the Avaro-Slavs in the Balkans, and the Persians and later the Arabs in the Middle East and Anatolia. C. Mango has emphasized the plague, combined with other natural disasters, as "a factor, perhaps the determining factor, in the collapse of urban life."¹⁶⁷ There is no doubt that natural calamities acquired dramatic dimensions in the sixth century and they are described dramatically in historical and other sources. The fact that the plague recurred several times, after its initial outbreak in 541/2, undoubtedly greatly exacerbated its effect. The actual degree of impact, however, has been a matter of scholarly debate. Its importance has been disputed by some scholars, because there is insufficient archaeological, epigraphic and papyrological evidence to corroborate the literary accounts of the effects of the plague.¹⁶⁸ However, a careful study of the inscriptions from the provinces of Palestine and Arabia, the areas of today's Israel, Jordan and Syria, shows a sudden decline between the years 540-550. This may be merely coincidence, but it is possible that the decline was caused by the Justinianic plague.¹⁶⁹ For others, the information given by Byzantine sources is supported by Arabic texts and the plague clearly caused substantial population decline and poverty.¹⁷⁰ In some areas a decline in Roman Red Ware, imported from Phocaea, is to be observed from 550, while imports of pottery from Cyprus remained stable, whilst imports of African Red Slip doubled. It is possible that areas of western Asia Minor, where Phocaean ware was produced, suffered an economic crisis on account of the plague.¹⁷¹ Today most scholars agree that the consequences of the plague on the urban population were severe, and that a greater loss of lives occurred due to the plague in urban communities than in the countryside. But the plague alone did not cause drastic urban decline, since populations usually recover. Other factors, socio-economic and cultural and ultimately the enemy invasions caused the demise of cities.¹⁷² The written sources have been studied, and various models of population increase and decline and of economic development and regression have been proposed to explain the population and economic decline of the end of the early Byzantine period.¹⁷³ Earthquakes also devastated many areas of the empire in the sixth and in the seventh centuries and

¹⁶⁷ Mango, *Byzantium*, 68-69; Bratschk, *Städte*, 177 ff.

¹⁶⁸ J. Darbe, *La peste du VI^e siècle. Pour un réexamen des sources byzantines*, in *Hommes et richesses* 1, 107-119; Bratschk, *Städte*, 260 recognizes that Syria was struck by the plague and sees its effects in the end of major construction works at that time. However, he claims that the evidence is ambiguous and refuses to consider it the major factor behind population decline.

¹⁶⁹ D. Sogin, *Epigraphic documentation*, 164. The lack of inscriptions from Aphrodisias after the middle of the sixth century has been interpreted by Ch. Rousselle as consequence of population decline on account of the plague. This, however, cannot be proved in the archaeological record (Raté, *New research*, 165).

¹⁷⁰ P. Allen, *The Justinianic Plague*, *Byzantine* 49 (1979), 5-20; J.-N. Biscion, *La peste du VI^e siècle dans l'empire byzantin*, in *Hommes et richesses* 1, 121-125; L. I. Conrad, *The Plague in Bīdā al-Shām in Pre-Islamic Times*, in M. 'Abidin al-Bakka and M. 'Adhbi (eds.), *Proceedings of the Symposium on Bīdā al-Shām during the Byzantine Period II* (Antman 1986), 143-163; idem, *Epidemic disease in central Syria in the late sixth century: Some new insights from the verse of 'Isa ibn Thabit*, *BMGS* 14 (1994), 12-56; idem, *Die Pest und ihr zeitliches Umfeld im Nahr-Ostern des frühen Mittelalters, Der Islam, Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients* 73 (1996), 81-112; K.-H. Leven, *Die justinianische Pest, Jahrbuch des Instituts für Geschichte der Medizin der Robert-Bosch-Stiftung* 6 (1987), 127-181; Bratschk, *Byzantine Cities*, 32-36 for an important discussion of the sources; idem, *Städte*, 184-186 with a list of occurrences of the plague; Patlagian, *Peasants*, 84-92; Halkin, *Byzantium*, 111-112; Kennedy, *The Last Century*, 182-183; Liebeschuetz, *Decline*, 32-54.

¹⁷¹ Daughlin, *La Palestine*, 518.

¹⁷² Halkin, *Byzantium*, 97; Liebeschuetz, *Decline*, 56; Abulafia, *Byzantium*, 397-404.

¹⁷³ See recently Daughlin, *La Palestine*, 518-525.

many cities were ruined. When reconstruction work was undertaken afterwards, it was on a smaller scale than before and employed a poorer quality of materials and work, a phenomenon attested in individual buildings from all the provinces of the empire. In many cases, however, ancient buildings were left ruined and the communities' resources were directed only to the restoration of Christian churches and fortifications. Several such cases will be mentioned in parts III and IV of this book. Finally, some cities did not have time to see not even this limited recovery, since they were struck by the invasions.¹⁷⁵

The view that economic decline was a major cause in the structural demise of the early Byzantine cities has recently returned with greater emphasis. Numerous archaeological reports have shown that the cities' ancient public space, with its monumental buildings and large colonnaded avenues, were gradually disintegrating as early as the fourth century and that the process culminated in the sixth century. The various aspects to, and reasons for, this decline we explore in detail in parts II and III below. Here we note that there is no doubt that declining financial resources played a major role in the failure to maintain ancient public buildings and to construct new ones. Administrative changes and shifts in cultural attitudes were also significant factors. Although the decline of the cities' ancient public space is no longer taken as indication of a general decline of the economy,¹⁷⁶ a major crisis is manifest everywhere in the area of construction, in the deterioration in the quality of building materials used and the shrinking of public amenities. However, the overall impression created by the data from archaeological excavation is that in the sixth century the economy was still highly monetarized and the economic activities intense,¹⁷⁷ although there are signs that things were changing and that a period of economic recession was beginning. Liebeschuetz pointed to some signs of recession of the economy. A reduction in the circulation of coins is to be observed in some urban areas as early as the sixth century, as is an increasing use of local coins, suggesting a decline in long-distance trade.¹⁷⁸ Low levels of monetary circulation are also indicated by the very slight loss of weight of some coins dating from the late sixth century to the reign of Constant II.¹⁷⁹ This is a promising area of research, but more studies are needed on more areas of the empire, in order to draw any firm conclusions. In southern Palestine a decline of coins in the sixth century seems to have occurred, but there it has been interpreted as consequence of the cessation of military payments to the *limitanei*, since they had been replaced by Arab *foederati*.¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, growing inflation, caused by the lack of specialized professionals and of resources on account of the plague, may have created a preference for payments in kind instead of cash.¹⁸¹ In the West, invasions and the collapse of the Roman state destabilized society, caused population and economic decline and the destruction and relocation of many cities. Written sources describe aspects of this process. Archaeology throws light on the decline of urban life and economic conditions. In the fifth and sixth centuries, the cities show signs of ruralization with agricultural installations and burials proliferating in earlier public and residential districts. There was a dramatic decline of the population and of the urban upper class with large residential areas and aristocratic houses being abandoned. The rural type of house emerged in cities, while long distance trade declined. Many pottery industries which in the past mass produced Roman wares disappeared. Mass production of pottery ends in the first half of the sixth century and this coincides with urban decline, as there were no urban markets to sustain mass

¹⁷⁵ See supra, p. 25 the cases of Stobi in Macedonia Secunda and Philippi and Thessalon in Greece.

¹⁷⁶ See recently Bowden, *Epina Fusa*, 58.

¹⁷⁷ For an overview of economic activities and trade see Kingsley and Decker, *Exchange*; Kingsley, *Late Antique Trade*.

¹⁷⁸ Liebeschuetz, *Decline*, 43-45.

¹⁷⁹ F. Delamante, *Le fait et ses lois ou De l'évolution des espèces* (Paris 1994), 194-200.

¹⁸⁰ P. J. Casey, *Justinian, the Limitanei, and Arab-Byzantine relations in the 6th c.*, *JRS* 9 (1996), 218-231.

¹⁸¹ Morrison, *Mosaic*, 240 ff.

pottery production. Instead, the economy acquired rural characteristics, an indication of which is the use of wooden bowls and cups in the seventh century, and barrels instead of amphorae.¹⁷⁹

Most scholars recognize the importance of trade for economic prosperity. In the Hellenistic and especially Roman periods, economic growth was achieved through commercial expansion to external markets. However, the impact of trade on the urban and rural development is not yet appreciated and it is hardly mentioned in discussions of early Byzantine urbanism.¹⁸⁰ The breakdown of long-distance trade first occurred in the western part of the Roman empire, which collapsed in the face of the invading barbarians. The reasons for the collapse of trade were the disintegration of the Roman state, the impoverishment of urban élites, who had created demand for commercial goods and were involved in inter-urban economic activities, and the decline of cities.¹⁸¹ Archaeological evidence of a slowdown in international overseas trade is increasingly evident in studies on pottery from various sites. Difficult to track down for the non-specialist historian, the information now available allows more substantial conclusions concerning the decline of the international trade to be drawn. From the middle of the sixth century in the West, Byzantine exports reached only the cities under Byzantine control. From the seventh century, exports of good quality pottery do not reach the West, with only locally produced pottery available. Pottery evidence from the Aegean points to a regionalization of trade in the late sixth to early/middle seventh century. From the early sixth century, imported pottery gradually diminishes in Argos, and from the early seventh century the decline is sharp. In the Athenian agora, imports almost ceased after 550. A similar scenario is evident in Asia Minor, where the decline of late African pottery is attested in the early seventh century. In Sagalassos, the Sagalassos Red Slip Ware – tableware produced in the city since the late Hellenistic period – ceased to be produced in the sixth century. In Syria and Palestine the same phenomenon can be seen from the late sixth century. In Egypt imported amphorae from Syria decline at the end of the first half of the seventh century and in Cyprus from around 650 imports ceased, to be replaced by local products.¹⁸² The impact of the interruption of the international trade on urban prosperity can be clearly observed in the city of Petra: when, in the late third century, international trade routes no longer passed through Petra, the city began to decline.¹⁸³ These findings

¹⁷⁹ P. Arbut, *Local pottery in Naples and northern Campania in the sixth and seventh centuries*, in L. Sagui (ed.), *Ceramica in Italia: VI-VII secolo. Atti del Congresso in onore di John W. Hayes, Roma, 11-13 maggio 1995* (Florence 1998), 491-510.

¹⁸⁰ T. E. Gregory, *Archaeology and Theoretical Considerations on the Transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages in the Aegean Area*, in P. N. Karidiou (ed.), *Beyond the Site. Regional Studies in the Aegean Area* (Lanham, MD 1994), 144-148; Kingsley and Decker, *Exchange: Kingsley, Wine Trade*, idem, *Late Antique Trade: Morrison and Solini, Economy*, 212.

¹⁸¹ Ch. Wickham, *Overview: Production, Distribution and Demand*, in Hodges and Bowden, *The Sixth Century*, 279-292, esp. 290-292.

¹⁸² Poulou-Papadimitriou, *Kerameia*, 246-247; Yangaki, *Elaphouza*, 307; J. W. Hayes, in *Ceramique Méditerranéenne* (round table), 529-533; Arbut, *La Filoponite*, 142-143; Kautman, *The Decline*, 285 (in *Sardinia the decline of imported pottery and fresh coinage dates to the sixth century*); idem, *Two Late Roman Wells at Sant'Elia, AASOR 53* (1995), 81-82; idem, *A Late Roman Townhouse at Sant'Elia, in Forschungen in Lyden*, 49-66, esp. 62-64; Vandenbergh et al., *Sagalassos*, 256-267; 270; H. Kennedy, *Change and Continuity in Syria and Palestine at the Time of the Moslem Conquest*, *Ann 12* (1967), 254-267; A. Ussishkin, in *Ceramique Méditerranéenne*, 546-558, esp. 551; J. W. Hayes, *Pottery of the fifth and sixth centuries*, *ACAC XII* (1994), II, 541-548; idem, *Problems de la céramique des VI^e-VII^e siècles à Salamine et à Chypre*, in *Salamine de Chypre. Histoire et archéologie. Étude des recherches*, Louv. 13-17 mai 1979 (Paris 1980), 375-380; P. Arbut, *Aspects of Byzantine Economy: An Evaluation of Amphora Evidence from Italy*, in *Détroite et Spier, Ceramique*, 76-91; G. Magdarsch, *The late Roman ceramics from sector "C"* (Alexandria 1986-1987), *ET 16* (1992), 114-115; Kingsley, *Wine Trade*, esp. 56-58; J. Durlet, *Les conditions du commerce au VII^e siècle*, in Hodges and Bowden, *The Sixth Century*, 89-117 for a minor role of the trade; A. Carandini, *Il mondo della ceramica romana: un'indagine in corso*, in *Giardini, Local sources III*, 3-19 (on the role of the state in generating trade, which in fact was of local nature (amphora); see C. Wickham, *Mar, Sherick Holmes, and Late Roman Commerce*, *JRS 78* (1988), 189-193.

¹⁸³ Fiuma, *Late antique Petra*, 238.

have begun to alter our view of the role played by the Arabs in the collapse of the international trade network, following Pirenne's fundamental theory. Arab control of the Mediterranean broke down in sixth century.¹⁸⁴ Recently L. Lavan in the collective volume *Recent Research in Late Antique Urbanism* (2001) emphasized the economic factor:

Decisive change cannot be correlated in all regions with either foreign invasion, major cultural re-alignments, or plague. I tend to prefer incremental economic degradation in concert with all of these pressures. But a more convincing explanation will require detailed scrutiny of the subject's burgeoning archaeological projects which have overturned our perceptions of the late antique city in the past, and will continue to present challenges to generalization in the future.¹⁸⁵

From evidence drawn from various areas of the empire it has now become increasingly clear that long distance trade was in gradual decline before the Arab invasions. The mass-production of high quality goods and the specialization of major industrial facilities (i.e. pottery, glass, etc.) were progressively breaking down. The network of trade routes and markets was slowly falling apart. This had an impact on all the regions of the empire, since they were interdependent and their interdependency rested on trade. Consequently goods were increasingly produced locally and circulated to markets near the centres of production. From studies on pottery a more coherent picture of the changing financial circumstances in the sixth and seventh centuries is now emerging. At coastal sites in Greece amphorae continue to be imported until 600. In contrast, in the interior, the presence of imported amphorae begins to decline sharply after 550 together with the presence of fine tableware. The production levels of tableware in Greece are also significant. Volumes of local tableware in Greece decline from the middle of the sixth century, while in northern Greece they decrease from the first part of the fifth century. From the fifth to the seventh century tableware was imported, Phocaea being a major production site over the period 390-400-550. Then for some time African tableware was imported, perhaps to serve military and naval centres. Subsequently the presence of ceramic table wares declines very much in comparison to the earlier period, and J. W. Hayes wonders whether they were replaced by large bowls for serving communal meals.¹⁸⁶ It may be, however, that the ceramic tableware was replaced in Greece, as in the West, with wooden tableware, attested in later Byzantine sources as being used by the lower classes.¹⁸⁷ Also indicative of the altered historical conditions brought about by regional insecurity and changing trade patterns is the fact that after the end of the early Byzantine period large pithoi for storage of agricultural produce are found in houses from where trade with the neighbouring areas was carried out.¹⁸⁸ Finally, the appearance of hand-made pottery, traditionally associated with the invaders has been taken as a sign of urban and cultural collapse. However, the phenomenon is now seen as a return to traditional rural techniques, when high-quality pottery from specialized industrial centres ceased to be produced. Poor quality hand-made pottery for cooking appears in Cyprus in the early seventh century.

¹⁸⁴ R. Hodges, *Henri Pirenne and the Question of Demand in the Sixth Century*, in Hodges and Bowden, *The Sixth Century*, 3-14 (quotation in p. 6). See also Baran, *The transformation*, 367-400.

¹⁸⁵ p. 24.

¹⁸⁶ J. W. Hayes, in *Ceramique Méditerranéenne* (round table), 533.

¹⁸⁷ H. Sarris, *communication in a round table at the SBMAT 24* (2004), Morrison and Boddy, *Economy*, 256-267 note that the use of barrels for transportation of wine might have begun already in the sixth century.

¹⁸⁸ D. Bakirtzi, *communication in a round table at the SBMAT 24* (2004).

tury, when the cities of the island still prospered. It is certainly a sign of change in material culture and living conditions. The invasions precipitated the breakdown of the industrial and commercial activities.¹⁸⁹

This, then, is the background against which we approach the study of the sixth-century urban space: namely, urban and village prosperity and population increase until about the middle of the century, after which there is the beginning of a slow process of decline. This book studies two phenomena, the dissolution of the cities' ancient public space as revealed by the archaeological excavations, and the literary image of the city. The need to exploit archaeological evidence and at the same time the literary sources is even today not taken for granted in scholarly works.¹⁹⁰ In our view, however, such an approach is fundamental. We explore our subject in terms of the process and degree of urban change during the course of the early Byzantine period¹⁹¹ and as it culminates in the sixth century. Our main aim is to define the nature and the causes of the urban decline before the invasions, which means that urban transformation during the period of the invasions and afterwards does not concern us here. We also examine the contradiction between the historical reality and the image of the city in the texts of the period literature, in the hope of answering the question of whether the image of the city in the texts of the period conforms to the image of the city, in its transformation and decline, as it emerges from the archaeological record. Scholars have recognized the need to re-examine the literary sources, now that the subject of urban decline has been firmly established in archaeological literature.¹⁹² As research for this book progressed, the field of inquiry expanded to include several aspects of early Byzantine urbanism. New publications have constantly enriched the picture and complemented our knowledge of the subject. In order to understand the process of, and reasons for, change, it was naturally necessary to consider information from sources dating to before the sixth century. Likewise, in the presentation of the material, the characteristics of the dramatic urban crisis of the seventh century offer a contrast and at the same time the conclusion to a process of urban change.

The literary image of the city is diverse, moulded by various literary traditions: classicizing rhetoric, historiographical tradition and Christian ideology. In the texts of the sixth century the urban image pervades all literary genres. The imagery and vocabulary remain classicizing, thus frequently creating the illusion of an urban prototype which no longer existed.¹⁹³ The same sources, however, reveal the emerging mediaeval character of the city. Significantly this mediaeval character becomes more intense in the texts of the second half of the sixth century, thus coinciding with the changing physical character of the cities as it is revealed in the excavations.

We will consider in detail the physical appearance of the cities as it emerges from current archaeological excavations from all the areas of the empire. The investigation of the relevant archaeological publications was a lengthy and time-consuming task. There the nature of the evidence, dispersed as it is, in various geographical regions, enormous in quantity, fragmentary and diverse, constitutes material which is difficult for the historian to comprehend. Moreover, in most cases we still do not have final reports of the excavations. The often-changing conclusions regarding dating of monuments or their exact function add to the uncertainty. Of course, the historian engaged in a broad synthesis has the challenge and the obligation to reach conclusions above the horizon of a local reality. This is possible only when the archaeological material is studied en masse. Only then will common trends and developments be

discerned. Of course not all topographical information is useful for a comprehensive synthesis and so our presentation of the archaeological material will be selective with particular emphasis on modern publications in which the early Byzantine remains are not ignored and questions on early Byzantine urbanism are addressed. Equally valuable are the studies analysing the later development of the urban centres. Unfortunately these are few consisting of publications on Sythopolis, Apamea, Petra, Ephesus, Aphrodisias, Sardis, Anemurium and Sigalassos. We will also note regional diversities.

The volume of publications on Byzantine cities currently available is enormous. They present a divergence of ideas, perspectives and methodologies. The nature of the subject has been defined in various ways. Approaches have been devised and solutions proposed. A major difficulty has been created by the conviction of historians that the literary sources conceal historical truth. In other cases the interpretation of some sources creates controversy.¹⁹⁴ Thus answers are often sought in archaeological investigation. Our approach to the study of the transformation of the early Byzantine city is interdisciplinary.¹⁹⁵ The image of the city between antiquity and the Middle Ages will emerge as complex and diverse.¹⁹⁶ Since our emphasis is on the dissolution of urban space, administrative and social changes interest us only in terms of their impact on urban architecture and planning. We examine the disappearance of the cities' ancient monumental structure as the phenomenon of the decay of public space in favour of private interest. In this process of decay, the role of the élites and of the state was a determining factor. The cultural transformation of urban élites and their economic decline played a major role in the dissolution of urban public space. Particular importance will also be placed on ideological and social changes brought about by Christianity, the empire's new religion. Again, we analyse the ideological factor, only in so far as it was responsible for destroying ancient urban features.

There is no doubt that more information is needed in order to define with greater precision various aspects of the transformation of urban life, and place them accurately in the timeframe. However, the available evidence, gathered from urban centres of all areas of the empire and examined in a broad context, is sufficient to allow the historian to sketch the outlines of urban development, and understand its dynamics. The new evidence which future excavations will provide will certainly complement our knowledge of specific sites and will refine the earlier evidence, but it is very unlikely that it will radically change earlier historical conclusions. The overall picture, thus complemented by the evidence of the archaeological excavations scrutinized from the historian's perspective, will certainly appear very complex and often contradictory. However, it is our hope that it will reveal significant facts of early Byzantine urbanism.

¹⁸⁹ For example, F. R. Trombley, *The Decline of the Seventh-Century Town: The Excavation of Euchaita, Byzantine Asia Minor* (Istanbul, 1981), 65-80; A. Kachian, *The Mithras Shrine at Aphrodisias, Asia Minor* (Istanbul, 1981), 65-80; A. Kachian, *The Mithras Shrine at Aphrodisias, Asia Minor* (Istanbul, 1981), 65-80.

¹⁹⁰ On the disagreement between the written sources and the archaeological evidence and for the need for the historian to take into consideration the results of the archaeological investigation and research, see, for example, A. Kachian, *The Mithras Shrine at Aphrodisias, Asia Minor* (Istanbul, 1981), 65-80.

¹⁹¹ See the remarks of Marazzi, Rome, 22. 'In a word, the key to understanding the city of Rome between antiquity and the middle ages is complexity'.

¹⁹² See the remarks of Marazzi, Rome, 22. 'In a word, the key to understanding the city of Rome between antiquity and the middle ages is complexity'.

¹⁹³ M. Rastbach, *Handmade Pottery and Social Change: The View from Late Roman Cyprus*, *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 11 (1996), 81-104; Gregory, *Intima*, 155; 159-8; Poulas-Papadimitriou, *La dévotion inside la main est-elle l'architecture extérieure?*, *Données d'archéologie* 25 (2000), 35; idem, *Keramika*, 240-241.

¹⁹⁴ J. Lemos, *Late Antique Urban Topography: From Architecture to Human Space*, *L&L* 1 (2003), 171-195.

¹⁹⁵ For the need to examine change over longer periods of time see Cameron, *Ideologies*, 3 ff., esp. 18.

¹⁹⁶ Miglio, *La vita*, 277 ff.

¹⁹⁷ A. Kachian, *La vita*, 277 ff.



FIG. 2. The Yaktō mosaic from the village of Yaktō, near Daphne in Antioch, displaying hunting scenes, a medallion with the personification of Megalopsychia in the centre and a topographical border.

PART II

THE IMAGE OF THE CITY IN LITERATURE AND ART

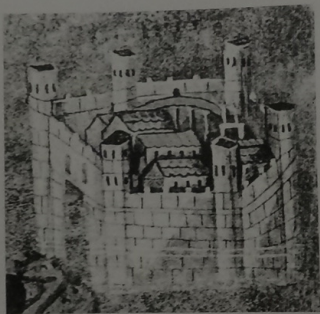


FIG. 3. Representation of the city of Nahor, depicted as a Hellenistic city walled with six towers, houses and a circular colonnade/circus. Vienna Genesis (6th c.), Nationalbibliothek, cod. theol. gr. 31, pict. 13.

CHAPTER 2

THE AESTHETICIZATION OF THE CITY AND THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The construction of identity is, at its heart, a matter of an imagination rather than a fixed reality.¹⁸⁷

The praise of the marvelous city

The image of the city as projected through its physical environment, its architecture and cultural traditions, dominates virtually all the literary genres of the early Byzantine period. It is an integral part of rhetorical works, historical narrative, poems, epigrams and hagiographical texts and this omnipresence is paralleled in artistic representations. Taken as a whole, the literary texts of this period present a panorama of the empire through its cities, their cultural traditions partly maintained and partly reshaped by Christianity and by the autocratic imperial rule. The image of the early Byzantine city is celebrated in many texts, especially as the theme of Procopius' *Buildings*, in Malalas' *Chronicle* and in the *Patria*. It emerges powerfully in Christian literature, especially in hagiography, even if it is often then rejected. The city is presented as magnificent and adorned with splendid buildings. It is prosperous and attracts people with its beauty. The literary expression of the city in the texts of the sixth century was shaped by the earlier literary tradition, in particular rhetoric.¹⁸⁸ It is inevitable that the attachment of Byzantine literature to Asianic rhetoric and to classicizing literary motifs obscures the historical image of the sixth-century city.¹⁸⁹ A literary-critical approach to the texts is needed to deconstruct such conventions and allow the real image of the sixth-century city to emerge. The articulation of the concept of the city through conventional rhetorical clichés and images also expressed the classicizing culture of the educated elite. Simultaneously, the Christian concept of the city was shaped in accord with theological tradition and Christian ideology, as opposed to the ancient ideal of the city held by the classically educated elite.

The literary image of the city was primarily developed in rhetorical texts, since the subject offered a splendid vehicle for rhetorical display. From there it was borrowed to be used in various literary genres.

¹⁸⁷ R. Miles, in *idem*, *Constructing Identities*, 4.

¹⁸⁸ Pernot, *La rhétorique*, 78-82, 178-210 and *passim*; J. Bouffartigue, *La tradition de l'éloge de la cité dans le monde grec*, in Lepelletier, *La fin de la cité*, 43-58; Robert, *Latres*, Whitty, *Procopius' Buildings*, 50-54. For the West, P. Rahlé, *La représentation de la ville dans les textes littéraires du V^e au IX^e siècle*, in Lepelletier, *La fin de la cité*, 183-190.

¹⁸⁹ Saradi, *Kallios*.

Models, themes and ideas employed in the *epitaphia* of a city were integrated into various texts, adapted to the characteristics of each genre and the author's personal style.²⁸

The early Byzantine literary tradition: Libanius, Nonnus and the *Patria*

Descriptions and praises of cities (*epitaphia*, *enkomion*, *enkomastike epitaphia*) are modelled on the rules established by Attic orators.²⁹ Menander wrote treatises defining the structure and elements of city *enkomia*. Amplification was an essential element of the *enkomion*. The city is described and praised for its location, the origin of its inhabitants, the beauty of its monuments and temples, the great size of the streets and baths.³⁰ Another approach to the city's praise was to exalt the citizens' cultural and intellectual achievements, to which the physical beauty was subordinate.³¹ In such texts the Roman empire is perceived as an empire of cities, which adorn it. Aelius Aristides in his *Oratio XXXI* (*De Roma*) praises the urbanization of the world by Rome in these words:

... but you have filled your whole empire with cities and adornments. When were there so many cities on land or throughout the sea, or when have they been so thoroughly adorned? Who then ever made such a journey, numbering the cities by the days of his trip, or sometimes passing through two or three cities on the same day, as if we were through avenues? ... Now all of the Greek cities flourish under you, and the offerings in them, the arts, and all their adornments bring honor to you, as an adornment in a suburb. The seacoasts and the interiors have been filled with cities, some founded, others increased under you and by you ...³²

Libanius' *Antiochekhor* (*Oratio XI*) is a long and elaborate praise of Antioch, which follows the rules of rhetorical art. It contains a glorification of the city's origin and tradition, a description of the attractive natural setting, praise of the city's planning and its architectural features, a profound appreciation of the inhabitants' cultural achievements and of the ancient civic institutions. From this lengthy praise emerges the image of a cosmopolitan city,³³ prosperous, proud of its glorious past and strong civic tradition. This is the image of the city as it was shaped in the literary tradition of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. In spite of rhetorical amplifications, Libanius draws a realistic picture of the city and its culture in the fourth century, a culture characterized by a public civic life. The text is often cited in works on rhetoric and it is a source of the first order for the history of early Byzantine urbanism (see *Lumen* for *Nicomedia* (*Oratio LXI*) is a shorter praise of Nicomedia, destroyed by an earthquake. Written in lyric tones, it is characterized by poetic images, and an emphasis on the attraction that the city exercised on the beholder. After an account of the city's mythical foundation, the location is eloquently described. The city, extending into the sea at both ends, embraces the sea in her arms, whilst also

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ *Menander Rhetor*, 35–54 (Spatang, 346–367); see C. J. Classen, *Die Stadt im Spiegel der Descriptions und Lumen* (*in der antiken und mittelalterlichen Literatur bis zum Ende des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts*) (Zürich, New York 1986).

³⁰ *Menander Rhetor*, 152 (Spatang, 423–461); *epitaphia* are also found in *epitaphia* (Zürich, New York 1986).

³¹ *Menander Rhetor*, 46–54 (Spatang, 359–387); *epitaphia* are also found in *epitaphia* (Zürich, New York 1986).

³² *Oratio XXXI* (Spatang, 359–387); *epitaphia* are also found in *epitaphia* (Zürich, New York 1986).

³³ A. D. Nock, *The Pagan City* (Cambridge 1945), 19–20. On the idea of the city in Libanius' works see now M. Francisco, *L'idea di città in Libanio* (Sant'Agata 2004).

extending up the hillside.³⁴ To those coming from Nicaea and emerging from the mountains, at a distance of 150 stades, the city gleams (*ἐκλάμπει*).³⁵ The spectator is led to ignore the beauty of the surrounding nature, the fruits of the trees, the spectacle of those sailing and fishing in the sea, so powerful and attractive is the sight of the city (*ὁδὸν ἡ δαυροῦ ποταμῶν, τῆς πόλεως, ἡ πόλεως*).³⁶ The city attracts the spectator with its beauty and fills all with passion, whether they are seeing the city for the first time or whether they have grown old there.³⁷ One can see the palace by the gulf gleaming (*ἐκλάμπει*) (*ἐκλάμπει τὸν κόλπον*), the theatre bright over the entire city, and other structures shining with beauty (*ὁδὸν ὁδὸν ἐκλάμπει τὸν κόλπον*).³⁸ The spectator approaches the city as if worshipping a statue (*ὁδὸν ὁδὸν ἐκλάμπει τὸν κόλπον*).³⁹ Several urban features are mentioned: the colonnaded central avenues, public buildings, water fountains, gardens around the city, the council house, harbour, the palace, the theatre, small streets (*ὁδὸν*), numerous temples, large baths, the temples, baths and one, the largest of all, an imperial foundation, and the hippodrome.⁴⁰ The oration, although presenting a condensed praise of the city in comparison to the *Antiochekhor*, contains all the elements of the praise of the city required by the rules of ancient rhetoric. The orator gives a realistic image of the city and its architectural features that served urban life and culture, intermingled with poetic images and lyrical language. The city is valued for the unsurpassed aesthetic experience it offers the visitor and for its splendid monuments where civic and cultural life took place.

Recommendations of teachers of rhetoric laid down that in formulating the praise of the city, each orator was free to develop various themes and arguments, depending on occasion and personal preference. For example, Himerius in his *Oratio XII* praises Constantinople, employing various places also known from other rhetorical texts, and chooses mainly the theme of the praise of the emperor and of the accomplishments of the inhabitants.⁴¹ First, the orator praises the location of the new capital on the site, which joins Europe to Asia and connects two seas. He emphasizes the city's size and beauty,⁴² and compares Constantinople with other great cities, Athens, Sparta, Rome, Heracleopolis, Argos and Amphipolis. Unlike Libanius, he does not describe architectural structures, except for referring briefly to baths and theatres in a passage in praise of the Senate.⁴³ The main focus of the oration is the praise of the emperor and of the inhabitants for their performance in intellectual achievements.

Later it is in the epic poem of Nonnus of Panopolis, the *Dionysiaca*, probably written in the middle of the fifth century, that we find substantial *epitaphia* of cities. The poem's theme is the life of the god Dionysus, his campaigns and victories in India, and his triumphal progress through the cities of the Eastern Mediterranean. The epic has been interpreted as a manifestation of the vitality of Hellenic culture

³⁴ Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

³⁵ Ibid., p. 333.20. On the theme of the viewer beholding the city from a distance see Strabo, *Geography*, 11.3.31.

³⁶ *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). For examples of descriptions in earlier literature of the city as a place of beauty see Strabo, *Geography*, 11.3.31.

³⁷ *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). On this topic in the praise of the city and Panopolis, see Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

³⁸ *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). On this topic in the praise of the city and Panopolis, see Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

³⁹ *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). On this topic in the praise of the city and Panopolis, see Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

⁴⁰ *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). On this topic in the praise of the city and Panopolis, see Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

⁴¹ *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). On this topic in the praise of the city and Panopolis, see Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

⁴² *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). On this topic in the praise of the city and Panopolis, see Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

⁴³ *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). On this topic in the praise of the city and Panopolis, see Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

⁴⁴ *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). On this topic in the praise of the city and Panopolis, see Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

⁴⁵ *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). On this topic in the praise of the city and Panopolis, see Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

⁴⁶ *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). On this topic in the praise of the city and Panopolis, see Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

⁴⁷ *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). On this topic in the praise of the city and Panopolis, see Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

⁴⁸ *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). On this topic in the praise of the city and Panopolis, see Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

⁴⁹ *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). On this topic in the praise of the city and Panopolis, see Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

⁵⁰ *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). On this topic in the praise of the city and Panopolis, see Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

⁵¹ *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). On this topic in the praise of the city and Panopolis, see Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

⁵² *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). On this topic in the praise of the city and Panopolis, see Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

⁵³ *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44). On this topic in the praise of the city and Panopolis, see Libanius, *Oratio LXI* (IV, 333–44).

The descriptions of these two cities are characterized by lyric tones and baroque taste, which are justified by the central theme of the epic, the passion of Dionysos. Several rhetorical elements of the *ekphrasis* are found in the praises of Tyre and Berytus. The cities' origin is placed in established antiquity,¹²⁹ through an artificial elaboration of the tradition. Tyre is presented as having been established by Alexander the Great, who connected the island to the mainland. A historical image of early Byzantine Tyre emerges through the economic activities of its inhabitants: the harvesting of purple and the cloth dye industry.¹³⁰ Then follows a poetic description of the sea and of the idyllic settings of the surroundings, which also touches on the vitality of economic activities and the successful combination of the maritime and mainland economy.

Unshakable, it is like a swimming girl, who gives to the sea head and breast and neck, stretching her arms between under the two waters, and her body whistled with foam from the sea beside her, while she rests both feet on mother earth. And Earthshaker holding the city in a firm bond floats all like a watery bridegroom, as if embracing the neck of his bride in a splashing arm. Still more Bacchos admired the city of Tyre, where alone the herdsman's way was near the fisherman, and he kept company with his piping along the shore, and gathered with fisher again when he drew his net, and the glie was cleft by the plow while opposite the ears were cutting the waters. Shepherds near the seaside woods gossiped in company [with boatmen, fisher with plowmen], and one place was the loud noise, the low whispering of cattle, the whispering of leaves, rigging and trees, navigation and forest, water, ships, and lugger, plowmen, sheep, reeds and sickle, boats, lines, sails, and comets.²⁰⁹

²⁰² Bowersock, *Hellenism*, 43–44. For a different view see Liebeschuetz, *Dionysiaca*, 81–83; idem, *Decline*, 231 ff.

²⁰⁷ Menander Rhetor, 50 (Spongel, 353.3); *ἀγρία τοι ἀγοστήριον ἡμισυνοῦν ἄνω*; 50 (Spongel, 358.2-359.1): *εὐδὲν ἐν γῆ, ἐν βελούδιοντι μὲν αἰ τῶν, βερεῖον δὲ αἰ ἡγοῖται, ἄγρια δὲ αἰ διηγουμένη*. On the antiquity of the cities as a major element of the city praise see Robert, *Études anatoliennes*, 305-304, idem, *Villes d'Asie Mineure. Études de géographie ancienne* (2nd ed., Paris 1962), 315-316. On the descriptions of Tyre and Berytus in Nonnus see R. Doatlová-Jeníšková, *Tyros a Berytus v Dionysiačích Nomia z Panopole, Listy Filologické* (Prague) V (1957), 36-57.

How's this? – how do I see an island on the mainland? If I may say so, never have I beheld such beauty . . . O world-famous city, image of the earth, picture of the sky! You have a belt of sea grown into one with your three sides!⁽²⁰⁾

Typical urban landscapes are vividly described as seen through the eyes of Demosthenes, who is depicted wandering through the city and admiring its architectural features: the streets paved with stones and marble slabs, and the fountains referred to by name, *Aphrodisia*, *Callirhoe*, *Daphne*, together with their legends.²⁰ The description of paved streets and sidewalks, and elaborate water fountains, which were very fashionable urban adornments in early Byzantine cities, is of course anachronistic. Type's inhabitants are praised as indigenous, in accord with rhetorical convention, but contrary to historical fact.²¹ Apparently the poet followed a local tradition developed sometime after the first century, thus enhancing the local patriotism and identity.

In the epic, the cities are elevated to divine heights and cherished for raising strong emotions in the gods: the gods feel attraction for the cities and desire to found new ones. Heracles declared that "now I cherish a passion of love for that city (*ἀγάβη* *ἡ πόλις*) *ἀνθρώπων* *ἐμῶν* *ἀλλόθεν* *καὶ* *ἀνδρῶν* *καὶ* *θεῶν* *καὶ* *ἀνθρώπων* *καὶ* *πόλεων* *καὶ* *κτλ.*" (1.102-103).²²¹ The praise of the city employing the motif of the gods' love (*ἀγάβη*) is also recommended by Menander.²²² The theme of passion that the cities inspire is often found in earlier chorosyllabic texts,²²³ but in the epic it is reinforced in the context of the passion founded by the myth of Dionysus.

The city of Berytus is praised in a lengthier account. Human activities and the grace of the location dominate the picture, followed by a lengthy description of the nature that surrounds it.¹²⁸ The inhabitants are indigenous, generated from Nature, not born of father or mother.¹²⁹ The city's claim to originality lies in the fact that legal studies developed there. Its reputation in law raises it to celestial glory: "O Beroë, root of life, nurse of cities, the boast of princes, the first city seen, twin sister of Time, coveting with the universe, seat of Hermes, land of justice, city of laws."¹³⁰

²² *XLJ*, 336–339, 351–352.
²³ *XLJ*, 352–365, *XLJ*, 358–573. On this rhetorical device see Saradi, *Beholdings*, 32–33. See also the elaboration of the theme in Themistius, *Or.* 1.2b–3a (I, 5). On the increasing importance of the function of seeing in late antiquity see I. Gualandri, *Aspetti dell'epifrasia in età tardoantica*, in *Tetto e imagine nell'Alto Medioevo*, *Seminari XLJ* (1994), 303–341; Pernot, *La didascalie*, 199–200.

XL 430-433.

²⁴ *Memorandum Rhetor*, 67 (Springer, 361.20-362.22).

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26 XLI 14-49

XII.14-49
XII.15-46

IP XL1143-145 (transl. W. H. D. Rouse)

Praise of the city is central to these works. It is shaped in accordance with the classifying schemes and sophistication of the authors who maintained a nostalgic, often anachronistic view of the city.

The praise of the city through the praise of its benefactor

In his Epistle 114, Libanius refers to Dadianus, a wealthy citizen of Antioch who was a benefactor of his city of origin, but, like many members of the upper class, preferred to live in Constantinople. The emperor presents Dadianus, as neglecting Antioch, for he was attracted by the physical beauty of the capital. He was like a happy lover of two beautiful women. Antioch is personified and makes a case for itself. It is in order to attract her generosity. She reminds him that he had adorned her with many houses, many baths inside and outside the line of the walls, gardens and *anastyles*. She also is surrounded by many baths which adorn her.²⁰ Libanius, too, applies the rhetorical tradition according to which cities could be praised on account of benefits, which they received from emperors or other benefactors.²¹ Renewal and restoration of cities earned provincial governors and emperors public acknowledgement and glory and was therefore a subject of praise by orators. Themistius wrote a *praise* to the emperor for the *rebuilding* of the city of Antioch. The sixth century comes the *Panegyric* by Procopius of Gaza for the emperor until *Philippopolis*.²² From the sixth century come the *Panegyric* by Procopius of Gaza for the emperor Anastasius, the *two eulogies* by Choricius of Gaza for bishop Marcian (*Orations* I and II), and one for the *dux* Aratius and archon Stephanus (*Oration* III), and the *Buildings* of Procopius of Caesarea. The image of the city emerges through the praise of its benefactors. This image, however, no longer depicts an independent civic spirit. Rather, it underlines the cities' dependence on their benefactors. These rhetorical texts, in spite of their adherence to traditional rhetorical formulas, are marked by an attitude to urban life very different from that found in the praises of Aelius Aristides and Libanius and reveal a

Reconstruction of Gaza: The Panegyric for Anastasius

Procopius' speech, delivered in the theatre of Gaza, expressed the feelings of gratitude of the entire city, which had honoured the emperor by setting up his statue in a public place.²⁶ In accord with the instructions of the teachers of rhetoric, the panegyric begins with a praise of the emperor's native city of Dyrassichum.²⁷ Procopius employs a rich variety of rhetorical devices, poetically handled. The city is referred to by its ancient name Epidaurium, thus evoking its antiquity. The orator praises the location of the city on the grounds that the city projects into the sea and benefited it, whereas the benefit from the land and sea.²⁸ The city is personified as a woman; a technique recommended by Menander to give the text dramatic colour.²⁹ The advantages deriving from Epidaurium's location benefit even those sailing onto the Ionian Sea, to whom the personified city offers a sympathetic hand reaching them with humanity

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THE BYZANTINE CIVILIZATION

dominant in rhetorical texts.²⁵ is also found in papyri and it was also used as a noun to replace the city's name.²⁶ In the papyri these adjectives are found in all kinds of documents, in acts in the Apion archives (e.g. *πῆναι ἀπὸ τοῦ Ὀμήρου-πρωτοῦ νόμου*), and in documents of legal proceedings (e.g. *πῆναι ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου*) (e.g. *πῆναι ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου*), and in the Petra papyri (*πῆναι ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου*), and in the Petra papyri (*πῆναι ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου*) referring to members of the upper class.²⁷ In other papyri documents, however, when reference is made to cities in connection with common people, such adjectives are not frequent. It is obvious that it was the upper class which associated itself with the ancient concept of a city's glory and its rhetorical phraseology. The personal style of the scribe also played a role. Thus, for example, in *P.Lond.* 1713.11 (ca. 569), written by the learned notary Dioscorus, a salaried baker stated that he was from *τοῦτοῦ τοῦτοῦ τοῦτοῦ* Ἀντιόχειας. The learned notary Dioscorus, a salaried baker stated that he was from *τοῦτοῦ τοῦτοῦ τοῦτοῦ* Ἀντιόχειας.

City pride is manifested in various texts and, apart from stressing the specific qualities of each city, there was a particular effort to present the city in question as superior to others and as having exercised great influence on other cities. In an inscription, dating to the late fifth to the early-mid sixth century, the following words are used:

Look at the city of Caesar, which nature has adorned on all sides. For it is beautiful, large and flourishing in letters, in wealth and in all sorts of honours, and is leader and mother of many beautiful cities.²⁹

In one of the Petra papyri, dating to 537, the city is defined by adjectives deriving from the glorious Roman past, combined with others of local origin (such as, "Mother of colonies"): "the Antonine imperial colony, distinguished and mother of colonies, Hadramic Petra, Metropolis of the Third Palestine Palaestina".²⁰ As Severus, bishop of Antioch, wrote, Alexandria's inhabitants were notorious for their pride in their city's supremacy, its wealth and elevated status among the empire's cities:

For it is the habit of the Alexandrians to think that the sun rises for them only, and towards them only the lamp burns, so that they even jestingly term outside cities 'lampless'. If for the purpose of right judgement it is possible to weigh the numbers of a people, like weights that are distinguished by the inclinations of the scale of a balance, the inhabitants of all these countries will produce no less than the whole of the Alexandrians.²⁶

²² Friedrich Linder, 28–30, G. Goldwag, *Themenreihe: Mathematik*, in: Demeter, *The Greek City* 125–46.

²³ N. Lénau, *Kölzianische*, JPE 41 (1967), 85. Cf. Gruber and P. van Minnen, *Seitling's Digesta. Twardził's Legal Anthology of Late Antiquity* (Amsterd. 1994), 77, for the earliest use of the word *kollektio* for Antiochopol.

²⁴ H. Zöllner et al., *Geschichte der Völker IV* (Vienna 1979), no. 247, 85–87.

²⁵ The tradition of *descriptio* and *laudes* were, cf. e.g. 538 (cf. J. Prioleau et al., *Antonia*, 1990) 202.

²⁶ For example, *P. Lond.* 1710.12–16; *Fragmenta Antiochensis notitia* (ca. 565–575).

²⁷ *Revue de Philologie*, no. 45 (p. 106).

²⁸ *Revue de Philologie*, no. VIII (p. 368) 172.11: *Αποκρίματα ἡ ἀπάντησις τῶν Κανονικῶν νόμων* for *kollektio* *kanonikon nomon* (cf. *apocrypha* for *apocrypha* and *kanonika* for *kanonika*).

²⁹ *Revue de Philologie*, no. VIII (p. 368) 172.11: *Αποκρίματα ἡ ἀπάντησις τῶν Κανονικῶν νόμων* for *kollektio* *kanonikon nomon* and *kanonika* for *kanonika*.

³⁰ See, for example, *Revue de Philologie*, no. 46, pp. 142–23.

In the past, Ananias benefited measures with which the emperor corrected existing problems, the empire is preserved both in terms of citizens and in terms of cities. The enemies of the empire, the barbarians neighbours, are defined in terms of cities. They set a nomadic life, without a defined place to settle, nor a city to dwell in (αὐτὸ νόμας ἐστὶν ἀσπίονος ἀφύρτος). Instead, they carry their household, an ungrasped hut, which they set up whenever necessary. Insecurity marked urban life all over the empire, in the reign of Augustus. The emperor's restoration of the empire is marked by magnificent buildings, but the barbarians have not been completely tamed. For others, the danger is even present, while yet others have been released. All previously freed there,⁷⁷ but now Anastasius' restoration program has put an end to this situation. City walls have been restored, some cities have received new fortifications, and fortresses have been built everywhere, defended by a strong army. As a result, the cities have become prudent and now display their orderly society to the barbarians (οἱ πόλεις ἀπὸ νόμου ἀπὸ δυνάμεως ἀσπίονος ἀφύρτος). (Στ. 694a-f) The emperor's restoration describes the process of the new government in the reign of Anastasius. The emperor, and in spite of the conventions of the *epitome*, the historical reality of the time is clearly evident in the text.

²⁰⁰ *Panegyricus Anastasi*, c. 2 (p. 5.25-27).

²⁰ Human customs were considered an element of the cities' culture worthy of praise: Menander Rhetor, 64-66 (Spengel, 362.6-7: το νόμιμον ἔθνος καὶ πολιτοποιήσαντες καὶ τὸ νόμιμον ἀνθρώπων καὶ θεσμούς ἐπαινοῦν).

²² Procopius of Gaza, *Panegyricus Anastasii*, c. 7 (p. 10.8-16).

¹⁷⁵ Menander Rhetor, 166 (Spengel, 416.10): τὸ πῶς ἐκ τῶν ὑπερῶν.

¹⁷⁶ Procopius of Gaza, *Panegyricus Anastasii*, c. 10; *καλὴν θροασίαν* p. 12.22, 25; *σοφρονὲν μόνον παιδεύσας* p. 13.14-15.

The empire's prosperity, and the most important public work of all.

The empire's wealth and grace, the most important public work of all.²⁹ The image of prosperity cities, secured by Anastasius' rule, is described in a figure of speech that employs the metaphor of a banquet. The emperor is depicted as a host and celebrator with dances and festivals (*ὁβελία* *ὀβελία* *λαοὶ* *εὐφροσύνη*, *χοροὶ* *μαζα* *μυστήρια* *αὐτῶν*), echoing a passage of Menander. The theme of personified provinces and cities dancing in the emperor's hall is a motif that is repeated and found in several texts of this period. rhetorical and poetic.³⁰ The emperor has just and caring governors, in each one a proof for a particular reason, and all are adorned with the emperor's favour (*προσφύνη* *αὐτῶν*), due to the benefits he has bestowed.³¹ The city of Gaza no longer honours the emperor with its grain in gratitude, but rather, because of the emperor's beneficence, it has been freed from taxation, but also from the need for rhetorical competitions. The expression of gratitude to the emperor is now of a purely intellectual nature, and it is this that dignifies the emperor. We find the antique mode of praising the city's identity and pride in the emperor's hall, but now the emperor is the one who is praised. The inscription on the emperor's statue should read: 'I, the emperor, the benefactor, on account of whom I am high-spirited and am a city' (*ἡ πόλις τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος, ὃν ὁ πόλις ἀγαπᾷ* *ἐκ τούτου* *ἐπαύρινον* *αὐτῶν* *ἐκείν*).³² The orator expresses the wish that the emperor rule long, and that the cities weave wreaths of honour for his happiness (*εὖς* *ὅτι* *ὁ αὐτοκράτορ* *ἔσται* *ἐὐφροσύνη* *ἀνθρώπων* *ἀνθρώπων*).

Bishop Marcian is praised by Choricus of Gaza as the city's leader and benefactor in two *enkomia* delivered during Christian festivals. The praise of the urban authorities and festivals had been established by ancient orators as a legitimate element of a panegyric.²⁸ As in the panegyric of the emperor Anastasius by Procopius of Gaza, the city's security is the first priority. The bishop is praised for the restoration of the city's walls, which apparently was achieved with imperial funds and contributions by the citizens under the bishop's initiative and supervision.²⁹ The bishop also emerges as a civic leader dealing with other urgent situations: he is praised for successfully controlling the soldiers' abuses

²⁷⁸ Ibid., c. 18-20 (pp. 18-20). See Menander Rhetor, 180 (Spengel, 423.23-25): ... καὶ ὅν ἐλάσαν οἱ βασιλεῖς προνοήσαντες, οἷον ὅτι λουτρὰ συμπέπνυκον, ὑδάτων ὄγετοὶ διεσθάρησαν, κόσμος δ' ἐπὶ πόλεως συνίσταται.

²⁷⁹ Procopius of Gaza, *Panegyricus Anastasii*, c. 21 (p. 20). See Menander Rhetor, 114 (Spengel, 389 5-6): ἀνολός ἐστιν καὶ κατασκευὰς τῶν πόλεων καὶ τῶν δημοσίων οἰκοδομημάτων.

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²⁸¹ Proconius of Gaza, *Panegyricus Anastasii*, c. 79 (p. 24.8-11). See Menander Rhetor, 92-94 (Spengel, 377.24-28).

²⁸² Procopius of Gaza, *Panegyricus Ananiani*, c. 30 (p. 24.18-19).

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, c. 30 (p. 24.22-23).

²⁸⁴ Menander Rhetor, 182–184, 206–224, esp. 220–222 (Spengel, 424–425, 437–446, esp. 444–445): praise of the festival and of the architecture of a temple.

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²⁰ Ibid., c. 53-54 (pp. 62-63).

³⁰² Menander Rhetor, 196 (S).

[illegible]

¹⁰⁰ *Minuscule 55*, *Cyrt et Iohannis*, 76.3 (p. 394) ἀλλοφρονεῖν βέ καὶ βροχεῖν, καὶ πόλεον, καὶ παρὰ πόλεον, καὶ ἀπονοστήσῃ. *Itinerarium*, καὶ ὅτι ἐκεῖ πόλιν ἔστιν ἐκείνην.

¹⁰⁰ See S. Mitchell, *Ethnicity, Acculturation and Empire in Roman and Late Roman Asia Minor*, in R. Alcock (ed.), *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 111–31.

³⁰ Rostomus Melodius, *On all Martyrs*, c. 59.2.1-2 (p. 507). See infra, pp. 113, 114.

construction works. In the *De scientia politica* we find familiar imagery: personified cities in distress stand as in a painting around the mother and queen city Constantinople.¹⁰⁸

The praise of the city and the church

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For Choricus, church construction involved recalling the memory of good deeds accomplished by saints. The preservation of this memory is most beneficial for Christians, since it encourages them to live a pious life,³¹⁴ a commonplace in hagiographical sources.³¹⁵ The glorification of the benefactor and

³⁰⁰ *De scientia politica*, c. 109 (p. 34): δι' δὲ καὶ στοιχειῶν αἰσθητῶν ὁμοῦν ἔκαστον εἰς τὰς μετέωρας δι' ἑνὸς νοήματος κατὰ τὴν μετρίαν καὶ περὶ οὐδὲν ὁμοῦν, ἐπὶ τῶν τροπικῶν καὶ ἀντιτροπικῶν καὶ ἀλλήλων οὐκ ὁμοῦν ἀπορροαμάτων τὰς ἐν τοῖς ὅρισις εὐθείας ἐγγειορροαμάτων. *But* ἐν καὶ ἀπορροαμάτων καὶ τῶν ἑλλείνων ἀπορροαμάτων ἀπορροαμάτων ἐν τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν. On the term *function* and its use in Aristotle see *Ernst*, *Studies*, pp. 23–6.

³⁰⁰ On description of churches and religious art in the early Byzantine period see C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire* 325-1453 (Toronto, 1986), 34-8.

¹¹⁰ Priscian, *Periegicus Anastasi* vv. 268-269 (p. 66).

³¹² Menander Rhetor, 220-222 (Spengel, 445). On some elements of the praise of the church deriving from the apologetic

of palaces in Greek literature (columns, their height, the brightness of the marble) see G. Agosti, *Ninno, Parthenon* E 1-2 v.l. descrizione di edifici nella poesia tarchanica. *Prometheus* 24 (1998): 193-214.

¹⁸² Choricus, Op. II, poem I (p. 26) nokvutšē šē āpa nōi yhuweta yohomāng; tuqūyā anōkō pōtē āpōtē hēgumētē. anōkō šē āpōtē. šē šē āpōtē. anōkō pōtē āpōtē. anōkō pōtē āpōtē.



FIG. 4. Mosaic pavement of a house in Cos with the personification of Cos dating to the fifth century.

of late antique literature,³²⁹ and it is also attested in Christian literature as a characteristic of the divinity and of the eternal time.³³⁰ In the texts churches are praised as beautifying the cities, a theme which became predominant in literary descriptions of cities from the end of the early Byzantine period.³³¹

⁵⁷ M. Roberts, *The Invented Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca, N.Y.: 1989), 44 ff.; Saradi-Mendelovici, *Christian Attitudes*, 53. On the preference for polychromy and variety of materials in that period see Mango, *Architettura*, 114-115; M. Caputo de Azavedo, *Policromia e polimeria nelle opere d'arte della tarda antichità e dell'alto medioevo*, *FaRiv* 1 (1970), 283-289 (= *idem*, *Cultura e tecnica artistica nella tarda antichità e nell'alto medioevo* (Milan 1986), 19-55); G. Agosti, *The mosaic of Paul the Bishop*, *ZPE* 116 (1997), 31-38.

²² Savastj, *Kallor*, 44. The theme of the beauty of the churches is also found in inscriptions; for example, IGjyr XXI/2, no. 38 (*ἡ ἀποκομὴ τῶν καὶ καλλιτέρων, α. 536-562*); no. 140 (*τῶν καλλιτέρων ἐκδοτικῶν ἐκδοτικῶν ἐκδοτικῶν, α. 603*).



FIG. 5. Mosaic pavement with the personification of Krisis from a house in Daphne near Antioch dating to the second half of the fifth century (Worcester Art Museum).

THE LITERARY TRADITION AND HISTORICAL REALITY

... ut et antiqui in numeris priusquam
continuas et nova simul antiquitate
producant. III

Procopius of Caesarea: Buildings

In Roman historiography and biography, the praise of the emperor's building activities was an established part of imperial panegyric. Suetonius best illustrates its use. Later it was introduced into Christian imperial biography. Buildings were perceived as adorning the cities, giving them magnificence and distinction. This became a theme recommended by Augustan orators.¹⁹ *Caesariensium* states that 'the fortune of the city, which is founded on its citizens, is also shown in the beauty of its construction'.²⁰ Evaristus in his *Enchiridionalis Historia* explains that the 'urban adornings are deemed for magnificence and distinction or summing up to public or private functions'.²¹ Walls, beautiful buildings, churches, charitable institutions, roads and public baths are the elements, which adorn the cities of distinction (only of Antonianus, not of Valerianus and Gaius).

Procopius' *Buildings* is a panegyric of the emperor in his capacity as benefactor for the benefits with which Justinian as a builder provided his subjects (500s bc αὐτῷ ἀνέβητιν ἀποδοῦναι τὰς ἀπο-

III: *Caeniodorus*, Variae VII 53.

²⁹ See, for example, Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* [II.25-59] with a lengthy account of construction of Christian churches by Constantine and Helen and destruction of pagan temples and an epiphany of the Holy Sepulchre in ch. 34-50; *Paul Silentiarius' praise of St. Sophia*. See Foster, *London, 28* and *St. Wulstan, Procopius' buildings* 56.

³⁰⁸ Menander Rhetor, 192 (Spengel, 429 15-17).

ἰσθὲν καὶ σπένδν καὶ λουτρὸν μερίβαν.

[illegible]

¹⁰⁸ Evagrios, *Haevis Ecclesiastica* II.13 (p. 65.12-14); cf. below tables; § notes on periphrastics and demonstratives.

¹⁰⁹ Reprographia, § notes on writing; § literature; subaltern writing.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., III.37 fn. 1.36.12-16).

The passage of time and the neglect of the cities:
an ambiguous realism

The theme of decline through the passage of time and neglect is found in earlier sources. For Libanius, the beauty of ancient cities had been maintained and had deflated time, until imperial agents began the depopulation of civic monuments. Treasures from still flourishing cities were transferred to Constantinople to build houses of officers of low social origin. 'Up till then beauty had deflated time'.⁴⁰ In the historiography of the fifth century, neglect explains the empire's decline.⁴¹ In the West

100 Lenin St., St.

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Suzuki, K., 1994

em Principes, De auditiis II.2. See also Roscher, *Epigraphica*, nos. 53 (p. 75-8), 106 (first century), 107 (second century).

¹⁰ Ibid., II 717, 89; III 47; IV 131, 31; 35, 119.

¹⁰ Ibid., IV 3.22; rág ívartilla ólönduðals, ó zgðens dögðaga náðne.

¹⁰⁶ See also Sordi-Mendeski, Demise, 401. In Chorvats the term used to designate negligence of urban buildings is *leptuhas*. Or III 45 (p. 61.4), 48 (p. 61.22).

D.M. VI 714

[illegible]

Thus John Lydis expresses the optimistic attitude that this period of decay and change, caused by time, was only temporary, since it is a law of nature to generate new things from the decay of old. The things that exist cease, as they exist, while the things that come into being do not exist perpetually, nor do they exist in the same manner, but they resolve through generation to corruption, then from the latter to generation. . . .⁴⁰ Lydis uses Aristotelian terms and concepts of Neoplatonic cosmology to explain the cyclic process of growth and *phthora*.⁴¹ Such attitudes are clearly efforts by intellectuals to deflect the changing world around them with the optimistic view that, in spite of all obvious change, the empire, its ancient institutions, the urban landscapes, classical education and culture may one day return to their ancient forms. In spite of repeated references to the crisis of urban space caused by the passage of time and human neglect, change itself is not seen in terms of decay. There are no signs of despair in these works, for both confidence in the empire's strength and the restoration effort of Houtman created an optimistic view of the world. Although the reference to change brought about by the passage of time and human neglect expresses a historical realism, the writers, in thrall to a glorious image of the ancient city, failed to see the long consequences the phenomenon they describe.

Secret History

It is in this work, considered by Souda as inventive (*poivys*) and satirical (*psaphodon*), that we find references to the urban crisis. The section on the consequences which Justinian's administration had on the cities opens with a statement evoking the old magnificence and beauty of the empire's cities: "We shall now tell how he succeeded in destroying the marks of distinction and all the things which confer honour and beauty both in Byzantium and in every other city."⁴⁰ These adjectives are not only

on Ward-Perkins. From *Classical Antiquity*, 35-36; G. Allardy, *Difficillima Tempora*, Urban Life, Incompetence, and Instability in Late Antique Rome, in Burns and Eadie, *Urban Centers*, 11-12, for other causes of the crisis; for efforts of recovery, see the same volume, esp. the essays by G. Allardy and J. H. W. G. Lieftinck; for the Transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, in *Rome and the World-Perkins*, The *Index* 99-1.

Middle Ages, in Brogiolo and Ward-Parkins, *The Rise of the*

as Theophyllact Simonsatta III 8.9 (p. 127; transl. Whately).

mit John Lydus, *De mensuris* I 1; *De magistratibus* III 39 (p. 192, 196-222).

see M. Maas, *Roman History and Christian Ideology in Justinian's Rescript*

⁴⁰⁷ John Lydus, *De magistratibus* II.23 (p. 118.15-17).

an Max. John Lyden, 88-89.

²⁰ Blass, *Robert L.*, 60-65.

in *Protophysa*, *Thalassidroma* XX, 11. *Grinnellia* cf. *grinnellii* (Grinnell) 1911, p. 103, fig. 103.

The city and its benefactor in poetry and inscriptions

The poems and the epigrams of the sixth century referring to the cities and their benefactors are laudatory, employing inflated vocabulary and eloquence. They emphasize the ideal bond of the cities with their benefactors, the governor or the emperor. Although the language and the style project an image of the city as it was in antiquity, the historical reality emerges clearly in the lines of these poems and epigrams. The governors and the emperor are praised for restoring mainly city walls. Several poems, written by Dioscorus of Aphrodisia in the second half of the sixth century, praise provincial governors for restoring cities, that is, in principle, their fortifications. The vocabulary is archaic, in a style reminiscent of Agathangos. The city is used to refer metaphorically to the *dax* of the Thebaid, 'you are for us the city of wisdom' (ἡ πόλις δὲ σοφίας οὐρανοπολις).⁴²² Cities are personified and presented as dancing. Thebes is called 'Lady Thebes' (κυρία Θήβη).⁴²³

Inscriptions commemorating restoration work by emperors, provincial governors or bishops also project the image of the city by means of themes glorifying benefactors. Most elaborate in rhetorical themes, classical vocabulary and style are the four metrical inscriptions recording the restoration of the walls of Byllis in the province of Epirus Nova in modern Albania, and the construction of the new shorter line of walls by Justinian during the reign of Justinian. They probably date to 549-550 immediately after the Slavic invasion.⁴²⁴ Justinian is also known from two inscriptions from Isthmus of Corinth.⁴²⁵ He has been taken to be either a high officer of the imperial administration, or the emperor's architect who supervised reconstruction projects in Byllis, Isthmus and Corinth.⁴²⁶

1. The most powerful name of Justinian / shall not be given to the stream of oblivion / but neither will long and immeasurable time, / getting older, cover the works of Victorinus / for his virtues rise on high.

2. With the providence of God and the Virgin Theotokos, / rightly serving the plan and the methods / of Justinian the most powerful emperor / after he built the fortresses of Moesia and Scythia / and of all the territory of Illyricum and Thrace, / Victorinus builds with piety the wall of Byllis, / he, whose nature is military.

3. I do not lament for barbarians, I do not fear / for I was granted a worker who works with his own hands, / the great Victorinus.

4. Stranger, do not overlook the beauty of Byllis / the walls of which once demolished were reconstructed / by audacious Victorinus.

The first inscription praises Justinian and his architect in terms of a theme known from Procopius' *Buildings*. The restoration work will secure eternity for the emperor's name, and the long passage of

⁴²² Dioscorus, 4.9 (l. 378) (ca. 551).

⁴²³ Ibid., 10.1 (l. 391), 4.5 (l. 566), 18.32 (l. 412), 4.367 (l. 568), and supra, n. 286 (for the Thebaid dancing).

⁴²⁴ S. Mavrou, *Southern Fortresses: Orient et Byllis au Antiquité et au Moyen Âge* (Le système de fortification de la ville de Byllis dans la Baie d'Argouli), *Bonn 2011* (1990), 169-200, 3. Anagnostou, *Architettura e decorazione iadonistica in Albania, Corfu e Ravenna* (1993), 455-460 (for walls between 551 and 554).

⁴²⁵ *IG IV*, 204, 205; *Fouilles et Publications de la Ville de Corinthe*, 276-280.

⁴²⁶ M. Gauthier, *Le rôle impérial de Victorinus au VI^e siècle*, *Épigraphie Grecque IV* (Paris 1979), 326-330; D. Fessard, *L'architecture byzantine et les fortifications de Justinien dans les provinces balkaniques*, *Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France*, 1968, 136-146.

time will not efface the work of Victorinus. Line 3 is a direct quotation from Sophocles' *Aias* (v. 446): *ἀνὴρ ὁ μὲν πολεμικὸς ἀνὰ πόλιν ἔχοντα*.⁴²⁷ The second inscription evokes *divine protection for the city*. It begins with a reference to divine Providence and to the Virgin Mary, and describes the restoration work as an act of piety (*εὐσεβείας*). It mentions Justinian's fortifications in Moesia, Scythia, Illyricum and Thrace, unknown from elsewhere. The third inscription expresses confidence in the fortification works with which the city will be able to resist invading barbarians. The last inscription commemorates the restoration of the west part of Byllis' walls, which had collapsed, while the second refers to the construction of the new interior line of fortifications on the east side of the city. The fourth inscription begins with a reference to Byllis' beauty (*ἡ πόλις ἡ καλὴ*). It is interesting that a couple of inscriptions from North Africa written in Latin and dating to 539-544 employ similar vocabulary: 'stranger, you see approaching this renovated city, and City, rejoice for having this plan master and look...'.⁴²⁸

Thus, the image of the city occupies a central place in oratory, poetry and epigrams. The literary form of such works is marked by rhetoric, grandeur and idealization. Confidence and glorification of the city is the message conveyed. The city is cast in a thoroughly idealistic mode, and, as it is connected with the benefactor-emperor or governor, is imbued with a heroic essence. The image of the city that emerges from such texts is that held by its patrons, modelled by the poet who still adhered to the old conventions. Tradition in literary production was deeply rooted. The inflated archaic vocabulary illustrated the image of the city with symbolic forms and concepts, not in the realistic terms of the immediate urban environment. The emerging new urban identity, the Christian identity, appears in most of the texts, although that, too, is seen from an idealized perspective. The image of the city is dominant, and the view of the city is unflinchingly optimistic. This was certainly an upper-class view. But the idealized image of the city cannot be explained only by the classicism of the educated elite. There must have been an emotional reaction that generated this idealized vision of the city. The crisis in urban space, the gradual disintegration of the urban monumentality was too deep and visible. As cities lost their ancient form and identity, the reality was becoming disturbing. Historical circumstances had created a new type of city, although assessment of the change, obvious to everyone, was too depressing for the classically educated elite to describe. Until about the middle of the sixth century, the intellectuals chose to face this reality through idealization and classicizing grandeur.

Historiography: changing perceptions of the city

Turning from laudatory genres, the modern reader might expect to find a realistic image of the early Byzantine cities in sixth-century historiography. However, historiography, also a literary genre in antiquity, labours under significant restrictions imposed by literary conventions. History was to a great degree defined by rhetoric⁴²⁹ and its affinities with poetry were often stressed.⁴³⁰ Much of Roman historiography was perceived as imperial panegyric, also aiming at indulging readers' desire for literary

⁴²⁷ The last two lines echo other verses of tragedians: A. Cramer, *Greek Tragedy in Sixth-Century Epics*, *The Classical Review* n.s. 17 (1967), 134.

⁴²⁸ *Revue* n.s. 17 (1967), 134.

⁴²⁹ See, for example, Cicero, *De Oratore* 2.15: *Videretur quantum minus ex oratore historia*. A. J. Woodman, *Rhetoric in*

Classical Historiography: Four Studies (London, Sydney 1988), esp. 85 ff.; C. W. Fornara, *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1983), 120-134.

⁴³⁰ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 10.1.3.

phantasy.⁴⁵³ For these reasons historical narrative was adorned with legends and stories (μυθολογία) and various digressions (ἀφαιρέσεις).⁴⁵⁴ We find digressions on foundations of cities,⁴⁵⁵ on provinces, their peoples and their famous cities,⁴⁵⁶ and brief descriptions (ἐκφράσεις) of cities. For example, in the work of Ammianus Marcellinus a lengthy description of Alexandria is inserted, with references to its mythological tradition, historical events and renowned monuments the tradition of the city's foundation and of the establishment of the line of the walls, the climate, the Pharos, the Hephistadion, temples and the Serapeum are to be compared only to the Capitolium of Rome, and Alexandria's library with 700,000 books burnt when the city was sacked by Caesar. There is also reference to Canopus, 12 miles from Alexandria, which took its name from Menelaus, steersman buried there. Alexandria is also praised as centre of letters in the fields of geometry, music, astronomy, mathematics, prophecy and divination, and medicine. It is also recognized as the birthplace of religions and related wisdom that influenced ancient Greek philosophers.⁴⁵⁷ Such digressions on cities are of interest because, although they are formulated in terms of traditional literary clichés, the selection of elements of cities for praise points to urban change in each historical period. However, historiographers do not discuss the transformation of urban layout and institutions. Such transformation emerges slowly in their work. As Ammianus Marcellinus admitted, historiography was concerned primarily with glorifying acts: "non omnia narrata sunt digna, quae per aequalem transire personam".⁴⁵⁸ Furthermore, historians were writing about the emperors' deeds and were mainly interested in the events occurring in Constantinople.⁴⁵⁹ Moreover, victories were appropriate to imperial panegyrics, and in periods of distress and profound transformation of earlier social structures, there was little interest in recording and analysing failures of the imperial policy.

Procopius' *History of the Wars*

In the military narrative of *History of the Wars* by Procopius, cities are mentioned only in the context of expeditions. This explains why the historian focuses primarily on the cities' military role. Brief references to the cities' size and population (μυρία or μυριάδες ἀνθρώπων),⁴⁶⁰ their first rank in the provinces or

⁴⁵³ Lucian, *Ἐὐαὶ καὶ ἐπιτομὴ αἰσθητικῶν* c. 7.8.4; Hieronymus, *Dei illud*, 404 B.

⁴⁵⁴ Lucian, c. 20. See also Ammianus, *Historia* 22.10.10, 22.10.11, 22.10.12, 22.10.13, 22.10.14, 22.10.15, 22.10.16, 22.10.17, 22.10.18, 22.10.19, 22.10.20, 22.10.21, 22.10.22, 22.10.23, 22.10.24, 22.10.25, 22.10.26, 22.10.27, 22.10.28, 22.10.29, 22.10.30, 22.10.31, 22.10.32, 22.10.33, 22.10.34, 22.10.35, 22.10.36, 22.10.37, 22.10.38, 22.10.39, 22.10.40, 22.10.41, 22.10.42, 22.10.43, 22.10.44, 22.10.45, 22.10.46, 22.10.47, 22.10.48, 22.10.49, 22.10.50, 22.10.51, 22.10.52, 22.10.53, 22.10.54, 22.10.55, 22.10.56, 22.10.57, 22.10.58, 22.10.59, 22.10.60, 22.10.61, 22.10.62, 22.10.63, 22.10.64, 22.10.65, 22.10.66, 22.10.67, 22.10.68, 22.10.69, 22.10.70, 22.10.71, 22.10.72, 22.10.73, 22.10.74, 22.10.75, 22.10.76, 22.10.77, 22.10.78, 22.10.79, 22.10.80, 22.10.81, 22.10.82, 22.10.83, 22.10.84, 22.10.85, 22.10.86, 22.10.87, 22.10.88, 22.10.89, 22.10.90, 22.10.91, 22.10.92, 22.10.93, 22.10.94, 22.10.95, 22.10.96, 22.10.97, 22.10.98, 22.10.99, 22.10.100, 22.10.101, 22.10.102, 22.10.103, 22.10.104, 22.10.105, 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⁴⁵⁵ Lucian, *Ἐὐαὶ καὶ ἐπιτομὴ αἰσθητικῶν* c. 7.8.4; Hieronymus, *Dei illud*, 404 B.

⁴⁵⁶ Lucian, c. 20. See also Ammianus, *Historia* 22.10.10, 22.10.11, 22.10.12, 22.10.13, 22.10.14, 22.10.15, 22.10.16, 22.10.17, 22.10.18, 22.10.19, 22.10.20, 22.10.21, 22.10.22, 22.10.23, 22.10.24, 22.10.25, 22.10.26, 22.10.27, 22.10.28, 22.10.29, 22.10.30, 22.10.31, 22.10.32, 22.10.33, 22.10.34, 22.10.35, 22.10.36, 22.10.37, 22.10.38, 22.10.39, 22.10.40, 22.10.41, 22.10.42, 22.10.43, 22.10.44, 22.10.45, 22.10.46, 22.10.47, 22.10.48, 22.10.49, 22.10.50, 22.10.51, 22.10.52, 22.10.53, 22.10.54, 22.1

Belisarius to a representative of the citizens of Naples intended to persuade them to surrender, the Byzantine general expressed his sentiments at the imminent human loss and the destruction of the city's "beauty".

Many times have I witnessed the capture of cities and I am well acquainted with what takes place at such a time. For they say all the men of every age, and as for the women, though they beg to die, they are not granted the boon of death, but are carried off for outrage and are made to suffer treatment that is deplorable and most pitiable. And the children, who are thus deprived of their proper maintenance and education, are forced to be slaves, and that, too, of the men who are the most educated of all – those on whose hands they see the blood of their fathers. And this is not all, my dear Stephanus, for I make no mention of the configuration, which destroys all the property and blots out the beauty of the city (*καὶ τὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἡρώδης πρὸς τοὺς πολίτας*). When I see, as in the mirror of the cities which have been captured in times past, this city of Naples falling victim to such a fate, I am moved to pity both it and you its inhabitants.⁴⁵

The expressive of silent attachment to the city's beauty leads customarily to the contrasting image of destruction by the war. Human life and city are also valued in a profound sense of unity. In other passages, civilized life is defined in urban terms, and thus contrasted with the rusticity of the countryside. The Vandals, since they occupied Libya, used baths, were dressed in silk garments, attended spectacles in the theatres and hippodromes, and enjoyed other pleasures pursued.⁴⁶ The city of Antioch is praised for its wealth, size and population, beauty, and the leisure and luxurious life of its inhabitants.⁴⁷

The most elevated descriptions of cities and urban life are found in the *Books on the Gothic war*. Threatened during the war, especially Rome, with their splendid and historical monuments, neglected and untended by the war, were a source of inspiration. Military events offered Procopius the opportunity to contrast the urban civilization of the Romans and the Byzantines with that of the Goths, and to elevate Roman monuments to national symbols of urban life and civilization. In a letter of Belisarius to Totila, who had decided to raze Rome to the ground, here the most beautiful and most noteworthy of its buildings, and turn Rome into a sheep-pasture, Procopius develops the theme of the urban beauty as viewed through the monuments, intimately linked with civilized life:

While the creation of beauty in a city which has not been beautiful before could only proceed from men of wisdom who understand the meaning of civilization (*σοφιστικὴν θεωρίαν θεωροῦντες*), the destruction of beauty which already exists would be naturally expected only of men who lack understanding, and who are not ashamed to leave to posterity this token of their character. Now among all the cities under the sun Rome is agreed to be the greatest and the most noteworthy. For it has not been created by the ability of one man, nor has it attained such greatness and beauty by a power of short duration, but a multitude of monarchs, many companies of the best men, a great lapse of time, and an extraordinary abundance of wealth have availed to bring together in that city all other things that are in the whole world,

⁴⁵ *De Bellis Gothicis* V 9.25-26 (transl. Dawkins).

⁴⁶ *De Bellis Gothicis* IV 8.6-7.

⁴⁷ *De Bellis Persico* 1.17, 36-37, 11.8.25: *ἀλλὰ τὸν πόλιν καὶ τὴν ἀρχαῖαν καὶ τὴν ἡρώδης πρὸς τοὺς πολίτας*.

and skilled workers besides. Thus, little by little, here they built the city such as you behold it, thereby leaving to future generations memorials of the ability of these all (*καὶ τοὺς τοῦ αἰῶνος ἡρώδης*), so that should to these monuments would properly be considered a great crime (*ὁδοῦται πρὸς τὸν πόλιν*) against the men of all time: for by such action the men of former generations are robbed of the memorials of their ability (*καὶ τὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἡρώδης*), and future generations of the sight of their works (*καὶ τὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἡρώδης*).⁴⁸

In this passage Rome's monuments, which Belisarius was trying to save from destruction, no longer possess political or other social function, but hold merely aesthetic and cultural value for the future generations.

In another passage Procopius again refers to the preservation of Rome's ancient monuments by the Romans as a sign of their love for their city. They were symbols of the greatness of their history:

Yet the Romans love their city above all the men we know, and they are eager to protect all their ancestral treasures and to preserve them, so that nothing of the ancient glory of Rome may be obliterated. For even though they were for a long period under barbarian sway, they preserved the buildings of the city and the most of its adornments, such as could through the excellence of their workmanship withstand so long a lapse of time and such neglect. Furthermore, all such memorials of the race as were still left are preserved even to this day, and among them the ship of Aeneas, the founder of the city, an altogether incredible sight. For they built a ship-house in the middle of the city on the bank of the Tiber, and depositing it there, they have preserved it from that time.⁴⁹

There are several references to ancient monuments in Procopius' *History of the War*. Most of them are found in the *Books of The Gothic War* and are connected to the Trojan war and the myth of Aeneas, the mythical ancestor of the Romans. Here they become national symbols connecting Constantinople with Rome and Troy and they legitimate Justinian's policy of the *renouveau*. The theme is treated by Procopius, who employs Thucydidean ring compositions, thus lending a majestic tone to *History of the War*.⁵⁰ What is of interest in the treatment of this theme from our perspective is that urban monuments, endowed with historical symbolism, are no longer connected with the tradition and topographical landscape of each city. Rather, they have become symbols of the state and are used to justify Justinian's wars in Italy.

Influence of Pausanias, which links cities with their glorious past, is also found in Procopius' *History of the War*. This is to be traced first in the reference to the oldest ancient name and legendary origin: some cities received their name from heroes and others from kings, or from physical characteristics.⁵¹ Second, reference is made to legends related to antiquities, for example to the case of Sicyon near Cumae and

⁴⁸ *De Bellis Gothicis* VII.22.6-12 (transl. Dawkins).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* VIII.22.5-6.

⁵⁰ H. G. Smith, *The "Mythological" in Procopius' "History of the Gothic War"*, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 21 (1950), 313-329.

⁵¹ Name from heroes: Procopius, *De Bellis Gothicis* VII.22.12-13 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 14.48-49 (*Καὶ τὸν πόλιν*); 22.31 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); *De Bellis Persico* 1.17.13-18 (*Καὶ τὸν πόλιν*); 11.8.25 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.26 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.27 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.28 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.29 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.30 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.31 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.32 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.33 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.34 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.35 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.36 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.37 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.38 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.39 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.40 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.41 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.42 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.43 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.44 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.45 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.46 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.47 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.48 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.49 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.50 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.51 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.52 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.53 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.54 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.55 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.56 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.57 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.58 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.59 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.60 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.61 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.62 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.63 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.64 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.65 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.66 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.67 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.68 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.69 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.70 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.71 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.72 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.73 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.74 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.75 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.76 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.77 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.78 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.79 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.80 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.81 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.82 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.83 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.84 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.85 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.86 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.87 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.88 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.89 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.90 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.91 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.92 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.93 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.94 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.95 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.96 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.97 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.98 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.99 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*); 11.8.100 (*Ἀπὸ τῶν ἡρώδων*).

her ovidian theme, the tasks of the Cabaean bear at Beneventum, the Palladium from Troy in the temple of Fortuna, later taken to Constantinople by Constantine, and the tomb of the hero Asopius in the city of Asopos near Laus, ⁴⁶ The account of the Palladium, a relic of the greatest importance for the Byzantines, and of monuments related to Trojan heroes, connected Constantinople with the Roman past, and underlined the legitimacy of the new capital. The legend would have been understood by the ancient reader as a justification of the Byzantine wars of reconquest in Italy. In the works of authors the Procopius who expressed the Constantinopolitan point of view, such accounts were invested with a symbolism extending beyond the local communities and expressing the national aspirations and the interests of the capital. As ancient urban ideology declined, symbols relating to the empire as a whole appeared increasingly in the literary works. The capital's ideology will ultimately dominate all other forms of local identity.

The *Chronicle* of Malalas

City foundation legends and references to ancient monuments dominate the *Chronicle* of Malalas. The work is a history of the empire with emphasis on the history and tradition of the cities, in particular of Antioch and, in the later part, of Constantinople. The image of ancient cities dominates the *Chronicle* throughout from the early accounts of the mythical period. For example, Ulysses' wish to return home means returning to his city Ithaca, his own fatherland (ὁς τῆς ἰθὺς αἰῶνος ἐκ τῆς πατρίδος οὐκ ἐστὶν ὁρᾶν). ⁴⁷ The narrative of the Hellenistic period focuses on the glorious era of urbanization. Alexander and his successors are praised for building many cities, and according to the *Chronicle* based on Ptolemy, Seleucus built 75 cities. ⁴⁸ The elevation of modest agglomerations to the status of a city involved, first, a new name, usually that of the mythical, royal or imperial founder, or of a member of his family. In some cases, the name may be symbolic, such as, for example, Kallinike, or Antiochia, for Constantinople, implying future prosperity. ⁴⁹

The foundation of a new city was completed through building activity ⁵⁰ and in the case of Hellenistic foundations especially through tracing the line of walls. ⁵¹ In the section of the *Chronicle* based on earlier sources, the elevation of a modest settlement to the status of a city involves granting the new foundation a legal urban identity (νόμος πόλεως), usually with the construction of walls and building. ⁵² Malalas passionately emphasizes the other foundation myths. They involved a sacrifice as a purification ritual and the creation of a guardian spirit, the Tyche of the city, to protect the new city. This was represented on statuary and coins in the form of a woman usually with a towered crown and symbols of the sun and of fertility. In the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the Tyche of each city symbolized future prosperity and was promoted in official iconography. In Malalas' *Chronicle* the Hellenistic institution of the urban Tyche was extended to the other mythical beginnings for the cities of Gordyn, Amazania, and Nysa. ⁵³

⁴⁶ *De Bellis Gothorum* V 14.7, 15.8-16, VIII.2.14.

⁴⁷ Malalas, 87.20-23.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 148.68, 154.43-45.

⁴⁹ For a list of cities or towns elevated to the status of a city see Jefferys, *Malalas' Sources*, 269 f., 27.

⁵⁰ Malalas, 148.12 (on Zosimos's) 148.6.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 151.49, 75.74, 153.31, 154.42-43, 159.20, 168.39-40.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 223.6, 248.15, 247.49-50, 268.18-19, 269.25-26, 326-327, 339.33.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 25.53-57, 26.45-46, 104.33-36, *Marinos, Buildings*, 109-107.

It is the rituals of the Hellenistic urban foundations, which are extensively developed in Malalas' *Chronicle*. ⁵⁴ They were performed to attract divine protection over the new foundation and secure safety and wealth in the future. Seleucus Nicator sacrifices to Zeus at a small city in Syria on the mountain Kassios and prays for the site of his new foundation to be revealed to him, which then duly occurs. An eagle flies past, seizes a piece of sacrificial meat and carries it to the old coastal city at the emporion of Syrian Perma. There Seleucus traces the line of the walls and names the city Seleucia after himself, as At Antigonia, built by Antigonus Poliorchites, Seleucus sacrifices to Zeus and prays with the priest Amphion for a sign as to whether he should build a new city on another site. Again, an eagle flies to the altar, grabs some pieces of meat and departs towards the mountain Sipion, where he throws the meat, thereby indicating the site of the new city. The city of Antioch was built a little further on the plain by the river Orontes, in order to avoid the streams running down from mount Sipion. The consecration ritual involves the sacrifice of the maiden Amathite in the middle of the city by the priest and miracle-worker (telester) Amphion. Antioch is named after Seleucus' son, Antiochos Soter. He also builds a temple to Zeus Bottios named after the home on the site of which Antioch was built. Seleucus protects the new city with tremendous walls and constructs a bronze statue of the sacrificed maiden, which becomes the city's Tyche and to which he sacrifices immediately. ⁵⁵ Foundation rituals are also mentioned regarding Seleucus' foundation of Laodicea and Apamea. ⁵⁶

Seleucus commemorates the foundation of Antioch by erecting statues: a stone statue of the eagle just outside the city, a statue of the head of a horse and a gilded helmet with an inscription commemorating his flight to safety and Antigonus' death, and a marble statue for the altar Amphion inside the Romanesque gate. ⁵⁷ There is a symbolic element in these legends. The cities' past is endowed with a supernatural character and a strong and prosperous future is foreseen. Thus, for example, the formation of rocks resembling human beings, just outside Antioch, at a site named even in Malalas' time "Giant", and the myth of the giant Pagros, who lived in the area and was burnt by a thunderbolt, symbolize the city's strength, in that it is situated in the land of the giants. ⁵⁸ Furthermore, Seleucus imitates Hercules who planned cypresses at Daphne, originally called Hierapolis after the hero. ⁵⁹

The emphasis on legends and ceremonies of purification in Malalas extends even to the Roman period, when, according to local tradition retailed in Malalas, restoration of cities after natural disasters included a sacrificial ritual of purification. The patrician Zervos who was sent by the emperor Nero to restore Diocæsarea in Cilicia, destroyed by earthquake, sacrifices a maiden and sets up her bronze statue as the Tyche of the city, now renamed Anazarvos. Tiberius sacrifices the maiden Antigone when he restores Antioch's theatre and adds another tier. ⁶⁰ When Trajan rebuilds Antioch, which has been destroyed by earthquake, he sets up a statue of the she-wolf with Remus and Romulus on the so-called Middle Gate and sacrifices there a beautiful maiden from the city by the name of Kalliope. The name secures Antioch's safety from natural calamities. The sacrifice, a bridal procession for the city, was made as atonement and to purify the city (ὅτις ἄρτος καὶ ἀκαθάρτος ἐστὶν πόλις, νεύσας, νεύσας, ὅτις πόλις ἀκαθάρτος). Trajan immediately restores two large peristyles and many other buildings, a public bath, an aqueduct and completes the construction of the theatre, which has been left unfinished. Finally

⁵⁴ On legends on the origin of cities see supra, pp. 53-54, 55.

⁵⁵ Malalas, 150-151.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 151-152.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 153.24-34, 154.35-43.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 153.10-17.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 154.54-59.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 202-203, 178.53-54.

he sets up a bronze gilded statue of the sacrificed maiden on four columns in the middle of the nympholeum of the prokemon. She is depicted seated on the river Orontes crowned by the kings Seleucus and Antiochus as the Tyche of the city.⁴⁷³

Such accounts of civic legends had a literary purpose. By embellishing the historical narrative, they gave the readers pleasure, whilst at the same time, as part of the tradition informing the *Patria*, they glorified their cities by referring to their mythical past shaped by gods, heroes, kings and emperors. The image of the city was optimistic, elevated to the sphere of the myth, mystical and projected into the future in bright colours. The cities' great future was securely indicated through the symbolism of ancient myths and the ascriptive power of monuments. Statues in particular were endowed with a mystical power to reveal future events through various signs.⁴⁷⁴ These legends were intended to be read as revelatory for they suggested a future of power and prosperity for the cities. The emphasis on pagan civic traditions has been rightly explained by the antiquarian tastes of the *litterati*. Attached to ancient culture, they wanted to preserve local civic traditions, which were about to fall into oblivion at time of this radical cultural and religious change. Such legends were reproduced in the epic of Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* and in Malalas' *Chronicle*, where they are intended to appeal to the nostalgic ideology of intellectuals. In these works the ancient city, hung with foundation myths, legends of purification rites and symbolic monuments, is a mystical and imaginary city. The poetic vision of the city, rich in legends and projected back to distant antiquity, stood in contrast to the reality of the early Byzantine period. In the Christian environment of the fifth and sixth centuries, the cities' architectural appearance had dramatically changed. The ancient monuments were left to decay, they were abandoned, dilapidated, or converted for other use,⁴⁷⁵ and their connection with the cities' mythical and historical past became increasingly irrelevant. In the *Patria* and in Malalas' *Chronicle*, the image of the city embedded in the pagan tradition, as presented through the foundation myths and the monuments, is in contradiction with the historical reality. It appears as a paradox that these legends celebrate the ancient city at exactly the time when its ancient structure was breaking down.

Some pagan civic legends were adapted to the Christian religion. According to the tradition, recorded by Malalas, the Palladium that Constantine removed from Rome is placed under his porphyry column in Constantinople, thus legitimizing Constantinople as the empire's new capital. Constantine names the capital's Tyche *Anthousa*, *Flora* in Latin, thereby securing future prosperity, and makes a bloodless sacrifice to God.⁴⁷⁶ This is the last surviving reference to a city receiving a Tyche, for the tradition faded away in the Christianized empire. However, in Malalas' narrative, the pagan foundation rituals are presented as unchanging and of relevance up to the sixth century. This has been explained by Malalas' own view of history, which sometimes lacked consciousness of historical evolution. At the same time, by incorporating past cultural elements, the latter were deprived of their pagan connotations and became part of history.⁴⁷⁷ The ritual established by Constantine to celebrate the anniversary of the foundation of Constantinople shows how civic ceremony was adjusted to imperial autocratic rule and imperial worship. A gilded wooden statue of Constantine holding in his right hand Constantinople's Tyche, *Anthousa*, also gilded, is to be brought into the Hippodrome on a carriage, escorted by soldiers holding candles, led around the turning post and placed in front of the imperial *kathisma*. All future

⁴⁷³ Ibid., 208–30–46.

⁴⁷⁴ Malalas, Buildings, 101–103; Dagron, *Constantinople*, 21–40 (on the *Patria* of Constantinople), 127 ff., 145–150, 150 ff.; Saradi, *Perceptions*, 57–66; Christ, *Chronique*, 249–252. See also, pp. 91, 178–180.

⁴⁷⁵ See infra, parts III and IV.

⁴⁷⁶ Malalas, 246–83–88.

⁴⁷⁷ E. Jefferys, *Malalas' world view*, in *Studies in John Malalas*, 55–66, esp. 60; Scott, *Malalas' View*, 147–164.

emperors are to stand up and prostrate themselves, while gazing at Constantine's statue with the Tyche.⁴⁷⁸ The symbolism was obvious: the emperor dominated the city's welfare and future destiny. He alone, overshadowed the city's legend and urban ideology. Constantinople's Tyche merely symbolized prosperity, and it was empty of the earlier civic spirit. Gradually the cults of the Christian God and saints, and in particular that of the Virgin, replaced the cult of the city's Tyche. Their attributes, like those of the pagan Tyche, were protective. In the sixth century Christian foundation legends also began to appear. In the account of the Justinian reconstruction of Palmyra, the city's legendary beginnings derive from the Bible. In the past, she was a great city, since David fought Goliath there before the city was founded. When Goliath fell, struck by David's stone, he was decapitated by David who carried his head to Jerusalem in victory.⁴⁷⁹ For this reason Solomon, in commemoration of his father's victory, built this great city and named it Palmyra, because it became the place of Goliath's death (*ἐκ γολγοθῆς πόλιν ὠνόμαζεν τὴν πόλιν*).⁴⁸⁰ As was fashionable at the time, Malalas understood the city's name as *οὐνομαντοπολις*.

An essential part of the cities' legends were the statues which were set up by talented, miracle-workers, as talismans to avert all sorts of natural calamities.⁴⁸¹ During the rule of Antiochus Epiphanes, the talented Leios ordered a stone to be carved from the mountain above Antioch with a huge mask (*ἀντοχούριον*), crowned and looking towards the city and the valley. The inscribed inscription saved the city from plague. At the time of Malalas this was still called *Haronion*.⁴⁸² The emperor Theodosius added to this statue a stone box containing a talisman made by Abiakkon to protect Antioch from flooding.⁴⁸³ The most famous of all ancient miracle-workers was Apollonius of Tyana. In Malalas' *Chronicle*, Constantinople's historical importance is projected into the past and Apollonius' magic power is extended to the capital of Byzantium. The modification of ancient legends in order to address contemporary issues is a technique to be observed in many sections in Malalas' *Chronicle*.⁴⁸⁴ Apollonius, we are told, made talismans to protect Constantinople from the storms, the river Lykos, tortoises and horses. From there he set off to visit other cities. In Antioch he made talismans to protect it from the north wind, from scorpions, and mosquitoes and established a ritual for this purpose. In the city also there was a talisman to protect it from earthquakes, made during the rule of Julius Caesar by the miracle-worker Deiborinus. The inscription on it read "unshakable", "immovable". Real life, however, demonstrated that the power of the talismans was limited. When a statue, a talisman against earthquakes, on top of a porphyry column in the middle of the city, was struck by lightning, Apollonius refused to replace it with a new one, since he was able to foresee the city's future destructions.⁴⁸⁵ In the early fourth century, during construction work a statue of Poseidon was found buried in the hope of averting earthquakes, but it was melted down to make a statue of the emperor Constantine. Such was the belief in the power of talismans, albeit created by pagans, that the destruction of this statue brought about the earthquakes that destroyed Antioch in the sixth century.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁷⁸ Malalas, 247–20–29.

⁴⁷⁹ In fact this is a reference to a contemporary Byzantine practice: McCormick, *External History*, 63.

⁴⁸⁰ Malalas, 355–19–27.

⁴⁸¹ Malalas, 107–108.

⁴⁸² Ibid., 177–25–25.

⁴⁸³ Malalas, 155–75–78.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 177–25–25.

⁴⁸⁵ Malalas reshapes myths and earlier history to express contemporary preoccupations, cultural values and political practices.

⁴⁸⁶ Scott, *Malalas' View*, esp. 150–156.

⁴⁸⁷ Malalas, 199–201.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., 244–44–49.

In the narrative of military expeditions, cities are identified as *polis*, *asty*, *pyramis* and *phlebotum*. In spite of his attachment to classical ideas and modes of expression Agathias is particularly concerned with the military importance of settlements. Those protected by strong fortifications and by the inaccessibility of their site attract his attention and are praised as military strongholds. They provide an opportunity for literary excursus. Brief descriptions of the location of a city were an established tradition in Roman historiography of the imperial period. In Agathias' work, the laudic descriptions of nature surrounding cities are adjusted to the new interest in the military character of cities. The city of Cumae in Italy is praised for its strong fortifications and the army of its location in a passage with low poetic tone:

Two other digressions retain elements of the literary tradition, while at the same time reflect the historical reality of the second half of the sixth century. The first is a description of Berytus during the earthquake of 551. The city is praised as being most beautiful (*οὐκ ὀλίγη*) and an adornment (*ἐκκοσμήματα*) of Phoenicia. In the earthquake Berytus lost its embellishments, namely its splendid buildings (*τοῖς ἐν τῇ πόλει κτίσμασι τοῖς ἐκ τῆς ἀρχαίας καὶ τοῖς ἀνὰ τὴν πόλιν ἀνέκδοτοις οὐκ ὀλίγοις*). This is the only passage in Agathangos' *Historia* in which architectural structures are treated as a distinct urban feature. The schools of law were temporarily transferred to neighbouring Sidon. But Berytus' restoration did not preserve the earlier architectural characteristics. Agathangos notes that the restored city was very different from the old (*οὐκ ὅμοια φερόμενα τῇ παλαιᾷ πόλει*).

²⁰⁰ Agnolius, *op. cit.* 14-15 (p. 6).

⁵⁰ On digressions in Agathias' work see Cameron, *Agathias*, 35–36.

see Agathias 1.2.2 (p. 11.9-10): *gouverneur de son vœu et selon son plaisir* the *παύση* of the *Βυζαντινὸν αὐτοκράτορα*. The Franks could be the only allies of the Byzantines against the Lombards. Cameron, *Agathias*, 50-51, 116-121.

Agathias' final digressions on cities are found in the book V.12, in connection with the fortification of Chios and runs from coast to coast across the Chersonese and protects the cities of Aphrodisias, Thessalonica and further Skotos. The latter is praised for references to it in ancient literary tradition – "renowned in poetry, doubtless because of its associations with the story of Hero's lamp and the death of her lover Leander."⁸⁰ Last comes the description of the small town Callipolis in the province of Europe in Thrace. Neither the size, nor its appearance, but the beauty of the surrounding nature justifies its name:

We have seen that in earlier literary works the image of the city was shaped by the consciousness of the classically educated elite. Now, however, the idea of the city has changed even in the eyes of a classically educated author like Agathias. The historical circumstances and the features of the early medieval city appear clearly in his historiography: cities occupied by barbarians lost their ancient Greek-Roman civilization, others were devastated by earthquakes and did not recover their ancient splendour; the praise of the city no longer included its antique architectural appearance, and with shifted embellishments cities' military character; the image of the idealized city was no longer that of ancient embellishments of urban architecture. Rather, it was now a small town surrounded by idyllic nature and fertile land. It is surprising that the realistic image of the city of the second half of the sixth century emerges so clearly as a result of a classifying author.

city in the work of a classifying and ordering intellect had reached the point of accepting the city as a model of the world. The city was no longer a fantasy of the past. One of the most celebrated themes of early Byzantine literature, the ideal of the urban transformation and of projecting the new model of the city in their work, the city was no longer a fantasy of the past. One of the most celebrated themes of early Byzantine literature, the ideal of the urban transformation and of projecting the new model of the city in their work, the city was no longer a fantasy of the past. One of the most celebrated themes of early Byzantine literature, the ideal of the urban transformation and of projecting the new model of the city in their work, the city was no longer a fantasy of the past.

see mid. 1115.2.4 (pp. 59.23-60.6).

See *ibid.*, II.15.2-4 (pp. 450, 461-462).

See infra, pp. 61-62.

906 V.12.2 (p. 178; transl. Frendo, 147).

and agricultural character, as can be seen in the historiography of Agathias and Simocatta, was gradually breaking free of the past and revealing the profound change in the structures and in the idea of the city. What we do not learn from their works are the pace and dynamics of the change. Agathias and Simocatta admittedly do not offer explanations for this urban change, but at least they give a picture, albeit fragmentary, of the new type of city.

The historiography of Simocatta, the last classicising author of the early Byzantine period, stands closer to the style of seventh-century products of ecclesiastical authors, high-style hagiography and administrative documents.⁵¹ The urban features recorded in Simocatta's *History* are related to military events, such as a description of the location which made the fort Akhis impregnable, or the restoration of Thessalonica's walls damaged by the passage of time.⁵² The only city for which Simocatta reserves a mention of its buildings is Antioch, and that in a general statement. In 573 the invading Persians destroyed the beautiful buildings before the city's walls (τά τε τῶν οὐλοποιούτων ἀπὸ τῆς πόλεως καὶ τῶν οὐλοποιούτων).⁵³ The interest in cities, in the urban architectural environment, aesthetics and urban culture, as we know it from earlier sources, is dramatically reduced. The new medieval Byzantine city had already been shaped in the people's outlooks and it is now presented as such in the texts.

Terminology

Examination of the use of terms designating urban settlements in historiography further illuminates the slow change of the city in the sixth century and the new function it assumed. Scholarly discussions on the transformation and decline of the Byzantine cities have been based to a large degree on change in terminology.⁵⁴ The use of the term *kastion* to designate a city in the Byzantine Dark Ages instead of the term *polis* is rightly taken to indicate the profound transformation of the Byzantine cities into small, fortified settlements. The cities had lost their traditional urban function, their ancient architectural appearance, their population had been dramatically reduced and their size had shrunk. The *polis* had become *kastion*.

In the Roman empire, when the status of a city was defined in legal terms, the word *polis* was used to identify urban settlements. In the early Byzantine period, however, when radical administrative changes were introduced, and the urban character of a settlement ceased to be legally defined, fluctuations in terminology became more frequent: towns and medium size cities are not clearly distinguished from large villages and settlements of a military character. Sometimes, however, even in sources of the Roman period the terminology identifying small cities is ambivalent: a small city could be called a city (*polis*, *polisma*) in one passage and a village (*kome*) in another.⁵⁵ The size of a settlement was the predominant characteristic differentiating a city (*polis*) from a town or a village (*kome*). However, the line dividing a city from a *kome* on the grounds of size was blurred even in official sources. In the *Synekdemos* of Hierocles, in the diocese of Oryens some *komai* are included.⁵⁶ Other terms used

⁵¹ M. Waller, *The Emperor Maurice and his Historian, Theophylact Simocatta on Persia and Italian Warfare* (Oxford 1990), 330–347.
⁵² Theophylact Simocatta I.12.2 (p. 62), I.14 (p. 67).
⁵³ Ibid. III.18 (p. 131).
⁵⁴ See, for example, p. 15.

⁵⁵ See, for example, the use of these terms in Josephus: I. F. Strabo, D. E. Gish, T. R. W. Longstaff, *Excavations at Sepphoris: The Location and Identification of Shikha, IJL 44* (1994), 223–225.
⁵⁶ In the province of Asia (*Synekdemos*, 660.6), Lycia (665.6), Caria (669.2, *vilages et parois*), Arabia (*ἡφανιστὸν πόλιν*, 722.2, 5).

deriving from rural or administrative terminology, are *demeia*,⁵⁷ *koma*,⁵⁸ *chora*,⁵⁹ *koma*,⁶⁰ *regio*,⁶¹ *tractus* (*litimata*)⁶² or *salus*,⁶³ which originated in the imperial *res privata*, and *akomata*.⁶⁴ The term *kastion* is mentioned twice.⁶⁵ However, other settlements, ranked as cities in *Synekdemos*, are labelled in Procopius' *Buildings* as *phroura* in the context of the Justinian restoration of their walls. Some of these were towns with military character, while others, like Dyrrachium, were cities. Here, rather than the size and the other functions of the city, it is their military character that counts. It is clear that the context and the function of the settlement that the author chooses to stress in each case determine the choice of the term *polis* or *kastion*.⁶⁶ Such cases as Apollonia, Odyssus, Nicopolis, Alatrius, Marcianopolis, Novae in Moesia Secunda,⁶⁷ Aegissus, Constantiniana, Callatis in Scythia,⁶⁸ Dyrrachium, Amantia and Alatrius in Epirus Nova,⁶⁹ and Anchiolus in Haemimontum.⁷⁰ All these settlements were in the Balkans and because of invasions from the fourth century onwards had received the form and function of fortified settlements (*kastia*).⁷¹

In most of the sources of the sixth century, the *polis* is distinguished from the *kome* in terms of size and population. Thus the *kome* stands between the city and the village. Procopius states that the *kome* Vellurus in Rhodope ranked as a city in wealth and population (*κλιττον γὰρ βίοντι καὶ πόλει καὶ πλούτῳ*).⁷² How close a *kome* was to a city can be discerned from passages describing the promotion of a small settlement to the status of a city upon only the construction of a wall.⁷³ In other passages, *kome*, *polisma* (small town) and *phroura* (military stronghold) are distinguished from *polis*.⁷⁴ They had different sizes and functions. However, the distinction is not always maintained. In some passages of Procopius, there is remarkable fluidity in the use of these terms: the same settlement may be referred to both as *polis* and *choron*,⁷⁵ *polis* and *polisma*,⁷⁶ *polisma*, *polichonion* and *polis*.⁷⁷

⁵⁷ Four in Phrygia Salutaris and seven in Pamphylia: *Synekdemos*, 678.4–7, 679.6, 8, 680.3, 4, 681.8, 10, 11.

⁵⁸ In Pamphylia: 681.6.

⁵⁹ One in Pamphylia and one in Caria: 680.9, 689.8.

⁶⁰ Two in Pamphylia: 681.7, 689.8.

⁶¹ In Pamphylia (681.7), Lycia (684.1), Bithynia (694.1, 2), Galatia Prima (696.8, 697.1), Galatia Salutaris (697.5, 698.1).

⁶² Cappadocia Prima (699.3), Cappadocia Secunda (700.8, 701.1).

⁶³ In the Iberian (640.8).

⁶⁴ Two in Thessaly (643.1, 2) and one in Helenopolis (711.9), and in Palastina Tertia (721.1).

⁶⁵ 640.8.

⁶⁶ Kastia Martin in Decia (655.5) and Klyma kastion in Augustanula Secunda in Egypt (728.7).

⁶⁷ For the convergence of the terms *polis* and *kastion* in the text and especially in the seventh century and the use of the term *kastion* for the military settlement see Brundis, *Salute*, 315–7.

⁶⁸ Procopius, *De aedificiis* IV.11.2, *Synekdemos*, 636.2–8. Dorostolon, however, is mentioned by Procopius as *οὐκ ἐστὶν καστῖον* (*De aedificiis* IV.7.10).

⁶⁹ Ibid. IV.11.20, *Synekdemos*, 637.1–5. Tomis, Callatis, Constantiniana, Zaldapa (Zaldapa in Procopius), Carus, Troadem, Augustus (*De aedificiis* IV.7.20), Halmyris (*De aedificiis* IV.7.20), Apsopolis (Apsopa in *De aedificiis* IV.11.20).

⁷⁰ Ibid. IV.4.3, *Synekdemos*, 633.1, 5, 634.14.

⁷¹ Procopius, *De aedificiis* IV.11.20, *Synekdemos*, 633.11.

⁷² See Dunn, *The transition*, esp. 61–67, 75–80.

⁷³ Procopius, *De aedificiis* IV.11.7.

⁷⁴ Ibid. III.14 (*kome*, *polis*), 10, 13 (*polis*).

⁷⁵ Ibid. III.18, 11.14 (*kome*, *polis*), 10, 13 (*polis*).

⁷⁶ Ibid. III.18, 11.14 (*kome*, *polis*), 10, 13 (*polis*).

⁷⁷ Ibid. III.18, 11.14 (*kome*, *polis*), 10, 13 (*polis*).

Fortifications alone also determined the status of a settlement as city. A settlement of the size of a small town, a *polis*, became a *polis* upon the construction of its fortifications.⁵² The reverse also could occur. A large unfortified city like Tarentum in Calabria, once it received walls protecting only a small part of the inhabited area, became both *polis* and *phronon*.⁵³ This shows that although the size of the population may have remained the same, the new line of the walls altered the function and the model of the city. The change is immediately reflected in the terminology. Also, the term *oikonomia*, which corresponds to *phronon*,⁵⁴ is used for cities in the context of military campaigns.⁵⁵ Thus the military terms, *phronon* and *oikonomia*, are used to identify the city's new character. More often the term *phronon* denotes a small town (*polis*), which in some cases was promoted to the status of a *polis*.⁵⁶ At times it is mentioned as a *polis* in several passages, and elsewhere as *phylaktikon*.⁵⁷ Procopius, however, rarely alternates the terms *polis* and *phronon* for the same settlement.⁵⁸

In the sources from the sixth century, the term *kastron*, which from the seventh century onwards defines most of the Byzantine cities, designates a small, fortified city. In the *Life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger*, we read that Soira was a *kastron*, which was a "small city" (*ἡ μικρὴ πόλις*, *ἡ μικρὴ πόλις*).⁵⁹ Also in the *Novel 128.20* of the year 545 the term *kastron* is placed next to the term *polis* (*ἡ πόλις καὶ τὸ κάστρον*).⁶⁰ In general in Procopius' works the terms city (*polis*), town (*polis*), *phylaktikon* and *stronghold* (*oikonomia*, *phronon* and *kastron*) are distinguished. However, as we have seen, sometimes the distinction is blurred, indicating the slow change in the function and topography of Byzantine cities.

⁵² As *Antonia* in the *Eximium* is called a *polis* (*De Bellis Gothicis* VII.13.5), a *polis* (*VIII.2.2*), *Antonia* in *Lazica*, a *polis* (*VIII.13.3*), *Eximium* (*De Bellis Persicis* II.20.18), a *phylaktikon* (*De Bellis Gothicis* VIII.13.8), *Chengshan* on the *Tigris* river, a *polis* (*De Bellis Persicis* II.20.4), *Epila* (II.14.2), *Harmonia* (II.25). Faint in Italy a *polis* (*De Bellis Gothicis* VII.11.32) and a *polis* (*VII.25.7*).

⁵³ Soira in the *Eximium*, *polis* (*De Antiquis* II.3.1), *phronon* (II.3.2) and *polis* (*De Bellis Persicis* I.18.14, II.5.8, 13.14, IV.25.20, 26.18.19). It is also called a *polis* by John of Epiphania, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, p. 587 and *Eximium*, *Historia Ecclesiastica* II.3.1 (pp. 133-137); IV.23.19 (p. 162.18).

⁵⁴ *De Antiquis* II.3.1 (p. 162.18).

⁵⁵ *De Bellis Gothicis* VII.22.12, 14 (other passages in *Antiquis* and *novissimis* *Antiquis* *Antiquis*); 15, VII.20.2 (p. 162.18).

⁵⁶ *De Bellis Persicis* I.18.14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

⁵⁷ *De Bellis Persicis* I.18.14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

⁵⁸ *De Bellis Persicis* I.18.14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210

Constantinople,⁵⁶⁶ which indicates that by this time the term had lost its original meaning of 'town'.

Thus the historians of the sixth century already used the terms *phorosion*, *kastion* or *ochroma* to designate cities, especially with reference to their military character in the northern Balkans in the context of military narrative. Progressively the role of the cities as military centres came to dominate the function and the perception of the Byzantine city. This becomes the cities' predominant role in the seventh and eighth centuries. In Theophanes' *Chronographia* the references to *poles* are plentiful in the first part of the work, but drastically diminish after Heraclius' reign. The term *kastion* appears only twice in the first half of Theophanes' *Chronographia*, but more than forty cities are recorded in the part from the seventh century on. Terms such as *kastion* and *phorosion* are found throughout the entire work.⁵⁶⁷

Malalas is the only one among the historians of the sixth century who paradoxically appears to maintain a clearer distinction between the terms *polis* and *kastion*. It may be because his narrative focuses on major urban centres, away from the areas in the northern Balkans, where Procopius prefers the term *kastion*. It may also be explained by the fact that the concept of the ancient city is a central theme in his *Chronicle*. The Christian perception of history in the *Chronicle*, and the simple literary style and language, are at odds with the ancient concept of the city, as reflected in legends, monuments and city terminology.

The Anonymous' *Strategikon*: the militarization of the Byzantine city

The new military function of the city in the sixth century is clearly explained in the treatise *On Strategy* (*Περὶ Στρατηγικῆς*) by an anonymous author. The author insists that the only consideration, which should be taken into account in founding a new city is security. In the past people believed that prosperity would remain forever⁵⁶⁸ and thus built their cities on level ground, paying attention to their appearance, but not to security (οὐ μὴδ' αὖ τῆς ἀσφαλείας ἢ τῆς εὐκταρείας). They adorned the cities with gardens, parks and lawns. By the time of the author, however, security, rather than appearance, has become the primary consideration when choosing the site of a city (τὴν ἀσφάλειαν μᾶλλον τῆς εὐκταρείας, καὶ τοῦ καλλωπεύειν).

Suitable sites for building a city, especially if it is going to be fairly close to the border, are those on high ground with steep slopes all about to make approach difficult.

Also suitable are sites with large rivers flowing around them or which can be made to do so, and which, because of the nature of the land, cannot easily be diverted.

Finally, there are sites on a promontory in the sea or in very large rivers connected to the mainland only by a very narrow isthmus.⁵⁶⁹

Large cities on plains may be built only away from the frontier zone and should be defended by strong and solid walls. When there is fear of enemy invasions (τοὺς τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἐπ' αὐτῶν δεικνύσας), people seek security behind the cities' walls, or on hills, in caves, and on defensible islands.⁵⁶⁸ In

⁵⁶⁶ pp. 272.3 and 312.2.

⁵⁶⁷ *Kastion*, *Polis*, 341-380.

⁵⁶⁸ Anonymous' *Strategikon*, c. 11.25-26 (p. 32): οὐκ ἀποδοίξαι τὸν πόλιν τῆς ἀσφαλείας ἐκδοκῶντος αὐτοῦ...

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.1-3 (transl. Decker).

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, c. 6.6-10 (p. 23).

order to avoid congesting urban space, the outer ramparts (*proteichisma*) should be built secure and large enough to accommodate the population from the countryside seeking refuge in the city. The refugees established between the outer ramparts and the walls are also expected to fight the enemy.⁵⁶⁹

The profoundly changed character of urban space, as well as the reduced economic circumstances of the urban population, are described in the chapter 10 *On Building a City* (*Περὶ οἰκοδομῆς πόλεως*).

In building a city, the first consideration is the location. It should allow the construction of strong walls. The second consideration is safe access to water supply, especially if the source is located outside the walls. But there is no thought of building an aqueduct, since aqueducts can be severed by the enemy. The third condition is easy access to sources of stone and wood. Last is the access to food provisions from the immediate countryside or from elsewhere. If these conditions are not met, the project of building a city should be abandoned. The Anonymous sketches urban change in broad strokes. He ignores the commitments expected of a city conceived in the classical tradition, and his realism reveals the new identity of the contemporary city.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, c. 12.31-36 (p. 34).

The repudiation of the city in the Christian tradition and an urban vocabulary:
a contradiction

In spite of all this, in ecclesiastical literature the image of the city is also negative. The ascetics who *apostrophised* the desert avoided the temptations of the cities, in order to lead a spiritual life in Christ. *Lives of saints* and collections of their *apophthegmata* describe their experience, their constant fights against temptations and demons and their repudiating of material life.²⁸ Very often in hagiography, the cities are present, merely in order to be repudiated by saints who sought the salvation of their soul

and Living in a Scotia: The Dream of Eustathios the Bunker (BHG Nov. Aust. 1317d), *BzF* 21 (1995), 11-20; H. Behlmer, The

became a monk in a monastery near Emesa, then in a monastery in Constantinople, and later hegumenos in a monastery in Crataea of the province of Honorias (a. 500). In 511 he left the city secretly because he desired to attain solitude in Jerusalem and went to the *lavra* of St. Sabas. The bishop of Crataea, after many unsuccessful attempts to bring him back, excommunicated him. In 515, the saint returned to Crataea and after the bishop's death, accepted the bishopric. In the end, however, his desire for tranquility away from the city prevailed;⁶⁰ he returned to Jerusalem via Constantinople, and withdrew to the Tower of Eudesia, near the *lavra* of St. Sabas.

St. Theophrastus († 522), bishop of the small city of Berython⁶¹ near Jerusalem, became a monk and visited Jerusalem. There he was asked to administer the monastery of Flavia in Gethsemani. Soon, however, because of the proximity to the city, he felt distracted by the noise of visitors and withdrew to the desert. His appointment to the bishopric of Berython is presented as being imposed on him by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. The saint reached a compromise: he could divide his time between his duties in the bishopric and the solitude of the desert.⁶² Before his death, he went back to his monastery where he died. Compromise between the two opposing ways of life, the one in the desert and the other in the city, is expressed in a poetical passage at the end of the *Life* alluding to the way of life of the saint: "Although I stay in the desert, my thought overcomes the cities, reflects upon official duties and business, changes the one path for another, makes encounters."⁶³

Some texts of the sixth century stress the reconciliation between these two opposing models of life. In his 9th Homily, Severus opposes the belief that only asceticism in the desert could lead to salvation by suggesting that a pious life in the city, with a chaste marriage and almsgiving, can also lead to salvation.⁶⁴ In the 99th Homily, he justifies holding a bishopric over living a life in solitude and he employs arguments similar to those expressed in the fourth century: "Then get out of the city, prove your power perfectly and according to the law, and apply yourself to philosophical retreat. Why do you mix the two types of life, the one which is appropriate to the monastery and that appropriate to the city, which in practice cannot intermingle?" Severus replies with a re-evaluation of the opposition between city and desert in a passage echoing Theodoret of Cyrus: "But I do not disturb the order, but I know how to distinguish the places and the times, and I do not ignore what philosophy and solitude seek, nor what life in the world promises."⁶⁵ Both ways of life are acceptable, the only difference being that each form of life belongs to a different time and space context. Zachariah Scholasticus, however, in the *Life* of Severus, employs a hagiographical *topos*. Having gained the favour of the emperor, Severus faced pressure to take care of the Church and be ordained Patriarch. He refused because he desired tranquillity (*hēryxia*), the monastic life and contemplation. The monks of the East, however, with the consent of the people, elected him Patriarch.⁶⁶ The *Life* of Severus, written by John, hegumenos of the monastery of Beth Aphthonia, describes Severus' ascetic conduct when he became Patriarch of Antioch. He dismissed the cooks of the *episcopateion*, he closed its baths, and continued to live the austere life which he

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 247.15-21.

⁶¹ *Vita S. Theophrasti*, c. 10 (p. 89.2). On Berython, 90 km south of Jerusalem, the last town on the coastal road to Egypt see P. Figniet, *From Gaza to Pelusium: Materials for the Historical Geography of North Sinai and Southwestern Palestine* (132 BCE-640 CE) (Bonn: Orien University 2000), 176-171.

⁶² *Vita S. Theophrasti*, c. 10 (p. 89.3-4).

⁶³ "Ἐν τῇ ἐρημίᾳ καθύπερθε καὶ νόστον ποιεῖ, καὶ τὴν πόλιν ἀποφύγει, καὶ τὴν ἐρημίαν ἀποφύγει, καὶ τὴν πόλιν ἀποφύγει, καὶ τὴν ἐρημίαν ἀποφύγει, καὶ τὴν πόλιν ἀποφύγει." *Severus, Hom. 99*, PO 222 (1930), 218-219. See supra, n. 598.

⁶⁴ *Severus, Hom. 99*, PO 222 (1930), 218-219. See supra, n. 598.

⁶⁵ *Vita Severi*, PO 231 (1907), 110-111.

had led as a monk. He slept on the floor, he did not wash in a bath, he chanted for long periods of time, ate vegetables, and bought bread from the market which was sold to the poor.⁶⁸ The defence of urban life by Severus and the particular efforts of his biographers to portray him as attached to the ascetic ideal show that in such texts the literary model employed can mislead. In spite of the tension between urban life and asceticism in these texts, Severus' bishopric is symbolically visualized in the dream of a holy man as the personification of the city of Antioch:

And I saw an exceedingly beautiful woman, and her tears ran down upon her cheek and her breast, and her garments were defiled and torn, and she was lamenting and weeping exceedingly, because of the nakedness of her flesh. And as I stood, I perceived a great commotion, and I heard one say unto his neighbor, Behold Severus comes to cut out the thorns from this place, and to plant the vine of the Lord of Hosts. Then they told the woman, saying, Fear not, O city of Antioch! Behold thy king Severus comes, and he is an upright man, built up in the canons which the bishops who assembled at Nicaea ordained. And the woman said to those that talked with her, When then will Severus come? And they said to her, As yet the sin of the council of Chalcedon are not finished. This therefore is the vision that I Romanus saw.⁶⁹

The image of Antioch, personified as a beautiful woman in despair, an image striking for its secular classical character, finds parallels in the *Miracles of St. Demetrius*. There the bishop of Thessalonica has a dream in which a *tragedia* predicts the city's future distress at the hands of her enemies and alludes to her as the bishop's daughter.⁷⁰

Saints and cities: a continuous interaction

In the lengthy epigram that St. Abercius, who flourished around 160-170 A.D., requested that be written on his tomb, the saint takes pride in having visited Rome, Syria and all the cities (*doristi areta*) as far as Euphrates.⁷¹ As we have seen, the activities of bishop saints who were active in cities stand in opposition to asceticism and its rigid rules, pursued away from cities, as do the activities of itinerant saints and holy men who visited cities for various reasons and saints who settled near cities and established contacts with urban communities. Palladius informs us that he visited many cities and large villages (*πόλεις καὶ ἀγέρας καὶ χωριά*), caves and ascetic establishments in the desert in order to get information on the life and achievements of holy men.⁷² The fascination with the city attested in all kinds of sources from the Roman empire and Late Antiquity is often reflected in the hagiographical texts. Many texts reconcile the desert with the city. In the *Leimon* of John Moschus, holy men travel from one city to another for a variety of reasons. Often their destination is the Holy Land, in particular Jerusalem, or a specific monastery. A hermit travels to worship the Holy Cross and the holy sites in

⁶⁸ *Vita Severi*, PO 22 (1907), 243.

⁶⁹ E. J. Goodspeed, *The Conflict of Severus Patriarch of Antioch by Athanasius*, *Emigres Texts Edited and Translated*, PO 48 (1908), 606-607.

⁷⁰ *Miracula S. Demetrii* I, 146-147.

⁷¹ E. Battekh, *Une nouvelle révélation de la vie d'Abercius, Osmes Christianus* 4 (1900), 306 (ll. 6-10).

⁷² *Historia Lausica* II, 4.22-24.

According to his hagiographer, St. Symeon Salos attained holiness by living in the dirt, namely in the city. He achieves such a degree of purity and *apafasia*, that he passes as pure as a pearl through all pollution and obstacles on the path to virtue, such as living in the city, keeping company with women and other similar sins.⁴⁰⁰ Thus he demonstrates his moral strength. His entry into the city of Emesa is unprecedented. He drags a dead dog from the garbage dump outside the city, and the school children run after him calling him ὀπίσκος, *puccio*. In church, he throws nuts at the chandeliers and at the women. He overturns the merchants' benches outside the church. He works for a merchant and at a tavern, but is dismissed for causing trouble. He appears naked in front of the owner's wife. He does not observe fasts, and relieves himself in the market place. He goes to the women's baths naked. At the theatre he throws stones at one of the mimes during the performance.⁴⁰¹ He goes out in public with actresses and behaves indecently.⁴⁰² Unlike other saints, St. Symeon Salos is not a protector of the city. On the contrary, on several occasions he demonstrates his supernatural power by punishing those who have ridiculed him, including children. Before a major earthquake he hits some of the school's columns with a throwing mark that will remain standing. By kissing selected school children, he points out those who are destined to die of plague. He prays that adulterous women be struck by a disease or by demon-

basilika for the night. Mark 2 of Alexandria leads a whole group of sailors in the streets of the city, half-naked, dancing and grasping the goods from the market, which he gives to his companions. At night he sleeps in the hippodrome. Only abba Dionys of Seceot recognized his sanctity and declared that he was the only "man" he found in the city.⁵⁴⁰ The reaction of the city dwellers to him is different from that of the citizens of Emesa to St. Symeon Salos. They feel sympathy for Mark because they thought that he was insane. Mark reveals his identity to the Patriarch and explains that he was pretending to be a saint in the city in order to achieve holiness and the purging of his sins. He dies the night he is forced to reveal his real identity to the clergy. The city honours him. The Patriarch and the Christian community give orders for the day of his death to be a feast day. Monks, hermits, and common citizens sought the blessing of his corpse. The whole population carried branches and candles and "sprinkling the city with tears" followed his corpse to rest.⁵⁴¹ A procession resembling a purification ritual. The saint can be accepted by the city only after his sanctity is revealed, which in turn leads to his death. There is a tragic element in the figure of the saint saint that emerges through the constant oppositions between urban life and sanctity. The stories of the saints *sauls* describe an irrational phenomenon not in accord with traditional social norms. Whatever the nature of these texts might be, ideological or fictional, so characteristic in periods of transition, they vividly project the persistent antithesis in the Christian tradition: sanctity versus city.

The integration of the saints into the urban environment

⁶⁴² John of Ephesus, *Lives*, PO 19/2 (1926), 263.

church and sets it before the altar. He requests that the city be purified with incense in the streets, the houses, and the walls. He also purifies the cities of Maphragit, Constantina, Edessa and Carrhae.⁶⁵³ Severus, Patriarch of Antioch, likewise saves the city from drought, epidemics and demons that attack the citizens.⁶⁵⁴

Gradually saints were integrated into urban life. City dwellers came to accept them, and for their part, the saints ceased to regard cities with hostility as places of sin, since they now had a role to play there. In the gradual acceptance of the saints in the cities, aristocrats played a major role. Having been Christianized by then, they offered protection to the saints.⁶⁵⁵ This change of attitude and the appearance of the urban saint are evident in several hagiographical texts.

We will look at two *Lives* which present particular interest on account of their ingenious treatment of the subject by the hagiographers, the *Lives* of St. Marina and St. David. St. Marina seeks shelter at a pagan temple near Berytus, escaping her husband who is trying to bring her back to Constantinople. Her desire to return to the capital is convincingly justified by the hagiographer. She hopes that in Constantinople she can escape her husband, and she wishes to see her spiritual father, Basilianus. While she is debating in her mind and in her heart whether it is appropriate to abandon her solitude and return to the city, a divine vision helps her to decide. In a dream three men by the names of Alexander, Antiochus and Constantine appear in front of her. They tell her that she will marry one of them, but she rejects them, arguing that she has promised herself to God. Then the three men, the personifications of the cities of Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch, compete among themselves. In three subsequent drawings of lots, Constantine is the winner. The message was clear. St. Marina, following the divine sign, goes to Constantinople.⁶⁵⁶ The male personification of the cities is a symbol unique in our sources. In this hagiographical text, written by a contemporary, probably a monk of the monastery of Basilianus, before the middle of the sixth century, the relation of symbolism to ideology and historical reality becomes clear. The attraction that the cities exercised on St. Marina corresponds to similar symbolism that we find in other literary genres. By contrast with earlier *Lives*, when the saint returned to Constantinople in 472-474, the capital received her without confrontation. The saint is returning home: her trip by sea is quiet and miraculously quick. In Constantinople, she explains that her visit to the capital is not a desertion (*ἀποστασία*).⁶⁵⁷ She became a "legal citizen of Constantinople" (*νομικός κοινοπολιτοῦ πόλεως*), when she received the donation of a *provision* to build her monastery.⁶⁵⁸ The legal aspect of the saint's residence in Constantinople also suggests her new strong ties with the capital.

St. David of Thessalonica († ca. 540) was also an urban saint, and his *Life* was written in Thessalonica ca. 720. He was an ascetic in the monastery of Saints Theodore and Merkourios, the so-called Koukouleovai, near the city's walls. He lived for three years on a tree by the church as a *dendrites* and then settled in a cell. Enjoying the support of the people and of the Church, St. David plays an important role in the historical events of that time in Thessalonica. His contact with the city is achieved only through miracles, and he is regarded by the entire city as an angel sent by God.⁶⁵⁹ A turning point in his relation with the city occurs when he is sent on a mission to Constantinople, to persuade Justinian to transfer the seat of Illyricum from Sirmium, threatened by barbarian invasions, to Thessalonica. He resists accepting the embassy, because any involvement in civil affairs would disrupt his holy way of life, the

⁶⁵³ Ibid., 259-261.

⁶⁵⁴ *Two Saints*, PG 22 (1907), 245.

⁶⁵⁵ *Two Saints*, Constantinople.

⁶⁵⁶ *Life of St. Marina*, c. 25 (p. 802A-B).

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid., c. 28 (p. 802C-D).

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid., c. 36 (p. 807A).

⁶⁵⁹ *Life of St. David*, c. 12 (p. 81-2).

sanctity of his solitude. Finally he concedes, but only because he considers the mission to Constantinople divinely imposed. On his way back, just twenty stadia from the city, he foresees his death, in imitation of Christ's death, which offers men salvation.⁶⁶⁰ Indeed the disruption of his solitude cannot be restored: he dies, while approaching Thessalonica.⁶⁶¹ A heroic concept emerges in the elaboration of this theme. By sacrificing his solitude in order to save the city, the saint becomes a civic hero. He is honoured by the entire city. The inhabitants of Thessalonica return his corpse to their city. They carry it around the wall, a symbolic act intended to secure his protection for the city, and buried it in his monastery.⁶⁶²

Before his death Patriarch Euthychius (552-565, 577-582) foresaw the troubles (*δυσία*), which were about to befall Constantinople, but which the text does not specify. He prays to God to end his life to avoid the pain of seeing the city's misfortunes (*ἀνδροπονία τοῦ πόνου*, *ἡν ἰδὼν τὴν ἀνδροπονίαν*). His prayer is heard.⁶⁶³ For the saint-Patriarch who is identified with the capital, the pain of the disaster that only he knew was imminent on the city was intolerable.⁶⁶⁴ During the rule of Phocas, Patriarch Thomas showed similar desires. He asked St. Theodore of Sykeon to pray to God to grant him a speedy release from the troubles threatening the empire.⁶⁶⁵ Indeed the Patriarch died soon afterwards. The development of the saints' intimate relation with the city in the sixth century finds interesting literary expression in the *Lives* of St. David and of Patriarch Euthychius. The first dies before returning to Thessalonica, because his ascetic life cannot be restored after the disruption it has suffered. The life of Euthychius ends on a profoundly emotional note that is tied to the capital's imminent troubles.

Enlarging the city's limits: the saints of the nation

Hagiographical texts also stress the ability of Constantinople to attract holy men, at the expense of other cities. Constantinople promoted saints as *national*, or at least *supra* civic. In the middle of the sixth century, Romanus Melodios received the divine power of composing hymns in Constantinople.⁶⁶⁶ St. Theodore, hegumenos of the monastery at Chora (504-595 or 568), Theodore's uncle, was asked to stay in Constantinople to defend it from heresies.⁶⁶⁷ The creation of national saints is emphasized in the *Life* of St. Gollindouch († 591). A Persian of noble background, she converted to Christianity and was renamed Maria. Her hagiographer employs civic vocabulary to describe her firm faith, which he compares to a strong wall.⁶⁶⁸ The saint played a major role in the restoration of the empire: the cities of the Holy Martyrs and Duras were returned to Byzantium by the Persians by the intercession (*ἐπεὶ*) of the saint.⁶⁶⁹ It is the capital, however, that claimed St. Gollindouch, although she came from a frontier area. Asked by the bishop of Melitene to go to Constantinople to bless the emperors and the

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid., c. 14 (p. 10-23-26), 15 (p. 10-29-32).

⁶⁶¹ Ibid., c. 18 (p. 13).

⁶⁶² Ibid., c. 19 (p. 13-14).

⁶⁶³ *Life of St. Euthychius*, 80-81 (l. 2509-2521).

⁶⁶⁴ On the rhetoric of the text see Av. Cameron, *Eustratius' Life of the Patriarch Euthychius and the Fifth Ecumenical Council*, *Koithypia: Essays presented to Joan Hussey for her 80th birthday* (Cambridge, Surrey 1988), 225-247.

⁶⁶⁵ *Life of St. Theodore Sykeon*, c. 135 (pp. 107-108).

⁶⁶⁶ A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Mittheilungen über Romanos*, 82-2 (1893), 600, 602; H. Delehaye, *S. Romanos le Mélode*, *AB* 13 (1904), 441; *Stavroulides*, 95-96.

⁶⁶⁷ *Life of St. Theodore Chrysoit*, c. 14 (p. 6-31-32); *ἡμερομηνία καὶ τὸν ἡμερομηνίαν ἀποβιώσαντος*.

⁶⁶⁸ *Life of St. Gollindouch*, c. 5 (p. 13-23-24); *δογματὶς καὶ τὸν ἡμερομηνίαν ἀποβιώσαντος*.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., c. 23 (p. 170-171-2).

emperor Heraclius and Patriarch Sergius,⁶⁰ before returning to Nicomedia where he performs miracles. In all the towns of the area and in the city people receive him warmly. They go out to welcome him and lead him in the cities in procession. He returns to Sykeon through *Helodromion*, *Synna* and *Galen*. He also travels three times to the Holy Land.⁶¹

In the account of his ordination as bishop of Anastasiopolis, the hagiographer defines the city in the following terms:

... through all his virtues and good deeds he exalted the renown of the city which had welcomed him, inspiring in the citizens such a virtuous activity that there city became the envy and the admiration of other towns and thus it really proved its right to its name of 'Resurrection' (Anastasis). It was fittingly entitled the city of Anastasiopolis (Anastasiopolis); it rose to fame not from its fortifications and the embellishment of imperial gifts, not from the size of its population or from the exceeding wealth and power of its prosperous inhabitants, but rather because it was enriched by such deeds of the inspired man as we have described and on account of these deeds it was fortified not by men alone – it was its fortune to be ruled and inhabited also by angels, and to be always under the oversight and guardianship of the heavenly King Christ.⁶²

In this passage there is a reversal of the traditional elements of city praise, as is natural, given the changed role of the city. The fortifications are now the primary element of the city worthy of praise, the imperial benefactions come next, and then the size and prosperity of the population, but, most importantly, the city has been enriched with the sanctity and the holy deeds of St. Theodore and strengthened by Christ's protection. The Christian ideology prevails.

The glorification of the city by its saint, especially the city of his origin, became a *topos* in hagiographical texts of high literary style. This is an adaptation of an element of laudatory rhetoric to hagiography.⁶³ Cyril of Scythopolis combines this *topos* with an allusion to a biblical story. The town, small and modest, in which St. Sabas was born, was until then unknown, but the saint makes it famous and distinguished in the eyes of all, just as Harmathum became renowned for being Samuel's fatherland.⁶⁴

We have discerned different images of the city in the hagiographical texts. The city is an ambiguous symbol, signifying either the lapse of morality or a place protected by the beneficent actions of the saints. The traditional incompatibility of the city with the ascetic ideal comes up in all hagiographical texts of the sixth century. It is found in the *Lives* of popular saints where the anti-urban ideal was strongly projected. However, although popular saints consciously avoided the cities, most of them played an active role in urban life by saving people from calamities and by healing individuals with their miraculous power. The social origin of the popular saints determines neither their choice of forms of asceticism nor their relations with the cities. Many of them had a socially respectable origin.⁶⁵ The popular saints who promoted an anti-urban ideal chose the countryside or lived on the periphery of urban

⁶⁰ Ibid., c. 130-137 (pp. 104-108), 154-155 (pp. 124-128).

⁶¹ Ibid., c. 156-160 (pp. 128-138), 24 (pp. 20-21), 50-51 (pp. 44-45), 62-63 (pp. 52-53).

⁶² Ibid., c. 53-54 (p. 50) (transl. E. Dvornik and N. H. Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints. Contemporary Biography of St. David the Solitary, St. Theodore of Sykeon and St. John the Evangelist*, Greenwood, N.Y. 1977, 130).

⁶³ Pernot, *La hagiographie*, 156-157.

⁶⁴ Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita S. Sabae*, 85-27-87A, see also Savada, *Kallias* 43.

⁶⁵ R. Brown, 'The "Low Level" Saint's Life in Early Byzantine World', in *The Byzantine Saint*, 126-127; *Patristic Hagiography*, 103; Sebeos, *The Urban Saint*, 74.

city,⁶⁶ she refuses, aware that her death is imminent. In her last prayer, however, she prays for the safety of the emperors, for Constantinople, the *ἡμετέραν πόλιν*, and for all its citizens.⁶⁷ She surrounding territory, and for all the cities and lands (*ῥήσων πόλεων καὶ χωρῶν*) of Christians.⁶⁸ She was venerated in Constantinople.⁶⁹

The Life of St. Theodore of Sykeon: the end of a tradition

In the *Life* of St. Theodore of Sykeon († 613), who came from the village of Sykeon near the city of Anastasiopolis in Galatia, the relation of saint to city is marked by a notable evolution. The contacts of the saint with the city and the ecclesiastical establishment were smooth, in contrast to the confrontations depicted in earlier *Lives* of rural and desert saints. He was well accepted in the urban environment and performed miracles for the urban population. The setting of the *Life* is, however, predominantly rural, thus providing much valuable information on the customs and topography of rural Anatolia. The main concern of St. Theodore was to relieve the rural population from sufferings and distress. He was ordained bishop of Anastasiopolis. Following the established *topos* of the genre, the hagiographer stresses the incompatibility of the secular concerns of the ecclesiastical administration with the monastic ideal.⁷⁰ As bishop, the saint faces serious difficulties in the course of his administrative duties. He makes enemies among the members of the upper class, he is treated disrespectfully by some, he is insulted and physically attacked, while some even attempt to assassinate him.⁷¹ Finally he resigns from the bishopric. On the other hand, as a monk, he does not avoid the cities. His visits to several cities are motivated by a desire to pray at specific churches, to carry on ecclesiastical business, or to assist the local population in distress. Fear of cities is no longer a dominant hagiographical theme. Theodore therefore visits Jerusalem, Constantinople and Scythopolis. He goes to Pontic Heraclea (in the province of Hecatomis) to pray in the Church of the Virgin and performs miracles. The leading citizens (*πρόκτορες*) of Anasyra (metropolis of the province of Galatia Prima) bring him to their city to save them from plague, which is then devastating the city. St. Theodore declares a day of supplication, when the inhabitants of the whole city and the surroundings assembled. He goes in procession with them and offers prayers to God, thus freeing them of the plague.⁷² There follows a second trip to Anasyra, and to Constantinople where he is invited by the emperor Maurice and Patriarch Cyrillus to give them his blessing. In the city of Germin he receives the relics of St. George. He is called to the city of Pessinus to save it from drought. There he proceeds from one church to another in a litany, followed by a liturgy, communion and a feast, which brings about the desired rain. He also visits Scythopolis in Paphlagonia and Anisorium and returns to Scythopolis. Anonimous and German.⁷³ In all these cities he performs miracles. At the invitation of the Patriarch, he visits Constantinople again via Doxyleon in Phrygia Salutaris and the emperor of Phylae. He meets the emperor Phocas, and predicts the imminent problems of the empire to Patriarch Thomas namely the enemy invasions, the empire's troubles during the rule of Phocas, and the coming of the adversary. Later he travels to Constantinople for a third time, at the invitation of the

⁶⁶ Ibid., c. 23 (pp. 170-24, 171, 1).

⁶⁷ Ibid., c. 23 (p. 171, 2-10), 34 (p. 172, 4-7).

⁶⁸ *Synaxarium*, 815-818.

⁶⁹ *Vita S. Theodori Sykeonis*, c. 88 (pp. 69-80), 62-63 (pp. 52-53), 74-116 (p. 62), 75-78 (pp. 62-66).

⁷⁰ Ibid., c. 75-78 (pp. 62-66).

⁷¹ Ibid., c. 44-45 (pp. 39-40).

⁷² Ibid., c. 78 (pp. 66-67), 82 (pp. 60-70), 100 (p. 88), 101 (pp. 80-82), 109-108 (pp. 84-87).

people, the fluency of the orators, the glory of the military. Only in one point Seleucia fails in the competition with Tarsus and quietly gives way and concedes the first place to Tarsus; this is because Tarsus is the fatherland and the city of great Paul.⁶⁷

The image of the city and of urban culture in the hagiographical texts is complex. Three major conclusions emerge from their study, however. First, urban life as depicted in the sixth-century hagiographical texts is thriving. The role that cities played in the saints' lives is major. Even saints who did not live in cities had direct contact with the urban population and the authorities and were deeply concerned with the problems of the community. Although urban life is seen as negative in terms of Christian morality, the image of urban life employed are still realistic and the underlying historical reality is that of prospering cities.⁶⁸ By contrast, in the hagiographical texts of the seventh century the setting of most of the *Lives* is rural and this has been rightly interpreted as evidence of urban decline.⁶⁹ The second conclusion is social. The saints of the countryside and of the desert were gradually integrated into the urban life. The third conclusion concerns ideologies. Sanctity and city are close to each other. The sharp contrast between the two opposed ideologies in hagiographical texts is substantially modified and a compromise is reached. This is a significant ideological change, the cause and the effect of the saints' integration in urban society and of the demise of ancient city culture.

⁶⁷ J. S. Thelkier, c. 27 (pp. 276-278-48). On descriptions and visions of cities in hagiographical texts in the early Byzantine period and later see Robert, *Lettres*, 153-154. Sarah, *Kallistos*, 64-66, 67-68.
⁶⁸ P. Lagarde, *Hagiographie*, 109-111; see also the remarks of A. Kaldon, *Two Notes on the Vita of Anastasios the Persian* in C. N. Constantinides et al. (eds.), *Phylodiplos: Studies in Honour of Robert Browning* (Venice 1996), 151-157, esp. 155-157.
⁶⁹ See supra, n. 570.

communities and their contacts with the cities were difficult. The greatest tensions are evident in the *Lives* of the ascetic saints whose conduct, since they had chosen to face the temptations of the urban environment in order to strengthen their purity of soul, was a negation of urban culture.

We have seen that in several hagiographies the writers reveal a change of attitude. There is now compromise, resting on rational argument, between city and country. Gradually, the sharp contrast between city and desert softens. In some hagiographical texts, some saints establish an intimate bond with their cities. We have seen the tragic element in the *Life* of St. David of Thessalonica, whose events unfold the saint with the dimensions of a civic hero.

What produced this gradual acceptance of the saints in urban culture? The support of the saints by the upper class was a decisive factor in their slow integration into the cities. It is not surprising that urban aristocrats in particular welcomed saints of aristocratic origin. Furthermore, the saints increasingly assumed leading roles in the cities, ecclesiastical, political and social. More difficult was the acceptance of the popular saints in the cities, where they often faced antagonism and hostility from the clergy. The support of the aristocrats and of the emperors facilitated their way into cities.⁷⁰ The progress of Christianity, the simplification of culture, a phenomenon often stressed, and the disintegration of the ancient institutions and city ideology were also important dynamics in the urbanization of the popular saints. It is not a coincidence that in the debate between urban life and desert the compromise is clearly being established in the hagiographical literature during the period when urban institutions and the ancient urban ideology were collapsing. The city was Christianized with its bishop and saints, and a new urban model was created, that of the Christian city.⁷¹

In *Lives* of high literary style, asceticism is defined by means of urban metaphors and terms reproducing classical vocabulary are employed. These literary figures are a legacy of earlier tradition. They reveal the persistence of city ideology and its appropriation by the Church. It should be stressed that the choice of urban vocabulary does not conceal the contradiction between city and ascetic life. The literary style of the hagiographical texts also determined the image of the city *Lives* written in high or classifying style employ more urban metaphors, imagery and civic terminology in describing the ascetic life of the saints and their relations with the cities. Furthermore, city praises are found in *Lives* written in high style. In the *Life* of St. Thecla, written in a classifying style, we find an *enkomiastrike ephrasma* of Seleucia where the saint has settled in order to pursue her missionary activity:

This is a city situated at the borders of the land of the East, she is first in rank and above all the cities of Isauria, situated by the sea and near a river. This river is called Kalykandos, and begins from a place high up, at the inmost areas of Keira, passes by many districts and cities, and on its way towards us it receives other rivers which come from areas on either side and make it that large that we see here; Kalykandos ends at our area and at the nearby sea which extends towards the east and the south and separates us from Cyprus. The city is admirable, most gracious, and so large that it is not lacking the grace of the right proportions; it is so splendid and charming that it surpasses most of the cities, it is equal with the others, but it competes with beautiful Tarsus for the limits, the location, the temperate climate, the abundance of fruits, the affluence of merchandise, the good supply of water, the grace of the baths, the splendour of the magistrates, the eloquence in the letters, the joyous

⁷⁰ Sarah, *Constitutiones*, 102-109.
⁷¹ A. M. Oswald, *L'urbanisme de la ville: quelques suggestions pour l'antiquité tardive et le haut Moyen Âge*, in *Brigitte and Wolf Perlmutter*, *The City*, 181-193.

THE CITY AS A VISUAL MOTIF IN EARLY BYZANTINE ART

You mean the city whose establishment we have described, the city whose home is in the ideal, for I think that it can be found nowhere on earth.⁶⁷⁸

Schematic representations of cities: an ornament and its symbolism

We have already considered various images of the city in the literary sources of the early Byzantine period. Now we turn to their parallels in art. The city as a literary and artistic theme is a central concept in this period, embodied in tradition. It is part of a specific literary and artistic development that becomes a question of style. Of course, the city in literature and art carries on a specific symbolism, that is, it refers to an underlying historical reality and a system of cultural values, although the image of the city is now, increasingly used as ornament. This aestheticization of the city in literature and in art expressed the spirit of the epoch, which looked back on the cultural consequences of the past.

Representations of early Byzantine art. The famous Umayyad Mosque, Damascus, Syria, is a good example of the type. The central figure is a personification of Megalopsychia, a personification of the city's civic life. In a medallion in the centre the personification of *Megalopsychia* throws coins to the hunters with mythological names in a scene thought to be a representation of a real *venatio* (Figure 6). Her gesture suggests the munificence of a public benefactor, apparently Ardabur, who financed spectacles and other aspects of civic life after the devastation of the city by the earthquake of 458. On the

⁶⁷⁸ Plato, *The Republic* IX.592 (transl. P. Shorey, ed. Loeb): ἐν τῷ νέῳ δὴ τὸ βούλεν οὐδ' ἄλλως ποῦναι λέγεται, τῷ ἐν λόγῳ.

N. Duvál, La représentation du palais dans l'art de bas-empire et du haut moyen-âge; après le Planctus d'Anastase de Sinaïte, *Études archéologiques*, t. 67, no 1, 1980, p. 1-10.

N. Duvál, La représentation du palais dans l'art de bas-empire et du haut moyen-âge; après le Planctus d'Anastase de Sinaïte, *Études archéologiques*, t. 67, no 1, 1980, p. 1-10.

Cahiers I 5 (1965), 207-254; G. De Francovich, *I Palatini di Antrocapo e di Alatri*, Roma 1970; T. Sawicki, *Problem i interpretacje w sfignifikacjach architektonicznych w sztuce rzymskiej i bizantyjskiej*, Warszawa 1978; N. Duvál, Représentations d'églises sur des représentations de villas sur des mosaïques africaines tardives (Waxauz 1982), *Revue archéologique*, t. 32, 1982, p. 443-448.

Les représentations de villas sur des mosaïques byzantines
mosaïques, *La Revue du Louvre* 22 (1972), 441-448.
880 J. Lassus, *Antioch* 1, 114-156; Downey, *Antioch* 659-668; Lassus, Yako, F. Cirokol, *Antioch Mosaic* (Sourabhi 2006), 254-275; Mundell Mango, *Antenis*



FIG. 6. The perinification of *Megalopneustia* in the Yalto mosaic.

border, of which only three parts are preserved, are depicted aspects of daily life in the city and various monuments (Figures 7a, 7b). On the side opposite Megalopsychia are the fountains Pallas and Castalia in Daphne, the *prabaton* (bath) of Arababur, the Olympic stadium, workshops of the Martyrion, a *peripatos* (portico), a public bath (to *dykionov*), three houses of magnates with the names of Leontius, Heiades and Majorinus. On the two other sides are depicted shops of various vendors, statues, different buildings, a plaza with the inscription *oxoww*, probably a *tenationon* at a crossroads, a bridge obviously on the Orontes, a circular plaza surrounded by trees, somewhat like a park, and a church. Individuals are shown on horseback, one in a position of prayer, two groups of two reclining and drinking, some selling merchandise, one with a rolled carpet on his back, another one with a woman on horseback, another bundle on his head, another one leading two sheep, others leading horses, a woman on horseback, another one carrying a package on her shoulder and holding a child by the hand, two pairs of dice players seated in front of a table in a portico. This is not an abstract image of the city. Rather, it is a real city vibrant with life, with all social strata represented, the rich, the merchants, women, slaves and peasants.

In Christian iconography depictions of cities appear in the catacombs early on. They illustrate biblical narrative and depict the cities where the action occurred. Depictions of cities may also stand for a country, such as Egypt.⁶⁸¹ We also find symbolic representations of the cities standing for the celestial city, heavenly Jerusalem. The best example is found in the dome mosaic of the Rotunda of St. George in Thessalonica, dating to the fifth century.⁶⁸² Schematic representations of cities surrounded by a wall, and personifications of cities, a pagan tradition, were included in Christian artistic compositions, adapted to convey a new message or used as simple decorative elements. They are found in mosaic pavements of various monuments, secular and ecclesiastical, as well as in small objects, and have been subject of special studies. Often such representations of cities are part of Nilotic scenes, which had a decorative or symbolic character. Deriving from the Hellenistic tradition, they multiply in the sixth century.⁶⁸³ In the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, produced in the second half of the fourth century, Rome appears at the centre of the Roman world, whilst most of the other cities are represented in a stylized and schematic design. Personifications represent the greatest cities of the empire, Rome, Constantinople and Antioch (Figures 8a, 8b). Alexandria is represented by the Pharos. Six other cities, Aquileia, Ravenna, Thessalonica, Nicaea, Nicomedia, Ancona are shown in a schematic representation resembling those in Palestinian churches.⁶⁸⁴ In sixth-century manuscript illuminations, the motif of walled cities is further developed, although it clearly derives from the earlier tradition (supra, p. 48, Figure 3).⁶⁸⁵ In other artistic compositions images of cities become purely ornamental, as, for example, in a sixth-century silver plate from Cyprus at the Metropolitan Museum, with the representation of the combat between David and Goliath, where the two cities flanking the figures are shown in a conventional manner.⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸¹ F. Bisconti, *Le rappresentazioni urbane nella pittura cimiteriale romana: dalla città reale a quella ideale, ACAC XI* (1986), II, 1305-1321. Representations of provinces as cities are also found in the copy of the *Notitia Dignitatum* in the Bibl. Nat. lat. 9691 deriving from a fifth-century original: Achaea, Europa, Palestine, Pamphylia, Lydia, Italy, Dlyria and Campania. See H. Omont, *Notitia Dignitatum* (Paris) nos. 38, 41, 43, 58, 63, 103.

⁶⁸² See Spitzer, *Thessalonique*, 125-164, A. Lidov, *Heavenly Jerusalem: The Byzantine Approach*, in B. Kihnel (ed.), *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art. Studies in Honor of Beate Narkis on the Occasion of her Seventieth Birthday* (Jerusalem 1998), 341-353, esp. 341-343. On the symbolism of Jerusalem in art see B. Kihnel, *From the Earthly to the Heavenly Jerusalem. Representations of the Holy City in Christian Art of the First Millennium* (Rome, Freiburg, Vienna 1987).

⁶⁸³ R. Hachlili, *Iconographic Elements of Nilotic Scenes on Byzantine Mosaic Pavements in Israel, PEQ* 1998, 106-120, esp. 111-115.

⁶⁸⁴ E. Weber, *Tabula Peutingeriana. Codex Vindobonensis 324* (Graz 1976).

⁶⁸⁵ Eisenparger-Katz, *Representationalism*, I II, esp. 10-14.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 14-17.

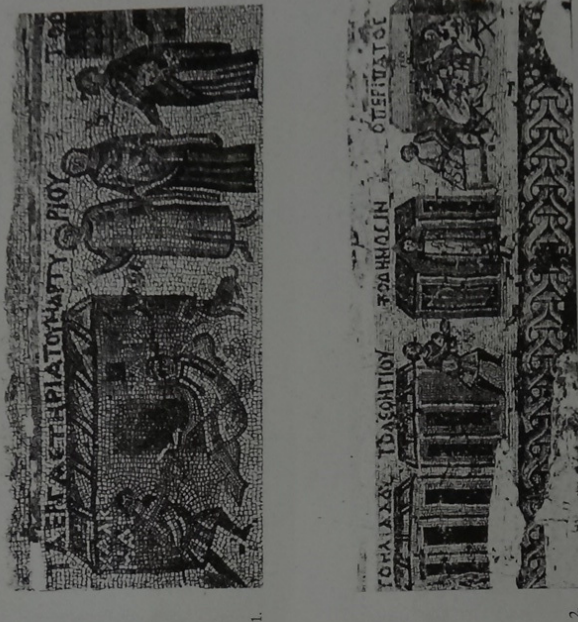


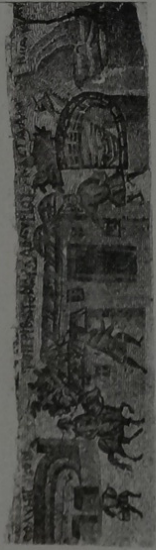
FIG. 7a. Scenes of daily life in Antioch from the topographical border of the Yabto mosaic: 1. The workshops of the Martyrion with a reclining figure. 2. The house of Heiades, of Leontius, a public bath (to *dykionov*), a portico (to *peripatos*) with a vendor and two figures playing a dice game.



FIG. 8a. *Tabula Peutingeriana*, Tyche of Constantinople with column and statue of Constantine.



FIG. 8b. *Tabula Peutingeriana*, Tyche of Antioch.



1



2

FIG. 7b. 1. The Olympic stadium in Daphne, the baths of Ardabourios, and Castalia fountain.
2. The Island in the Oronites with the octagonal Church of Constantine, the imperial palace complex, and a race track.

Early representations of cities in church mosaics occupy a marginal area in larger compositions and their function was merely decorative. For example, in a fourth-century basilica at Elin at T. Raghla a city is shown in the upper right corner of a mosaic only with its fortifications and without any other urban feature. Two separate structures are placed at a distance, all of them incorporated in a large composition with plants and birds.⁴⁹⁷ But in sixth-century church mosaics, representations of cities gain in importance. They occupy more central place in mosaic pavements, they are larger and they often become part of a narrative. In the Church of St. John the Baptist at Gerasa, the elaborate mosaic floor of the nave (ca. 531), circular with four *endebai*, contains three irregular sections between the round border and the central square decorated with a Nilotic scene with representations of cities and churches at renowned religious or pilgrimage sites. Only three have survived. Alexandria, walled with the Pharos, occupies the centre of the north segment with an inscription identifying it (Figure 9). Inside the walls with at least ten towers are shown churches marked with crosses. To the left is shown a city, perhaps Caesarea, and an entrance to the precinct of a church identified as the Church of



FIG. 9 Alexandria surrounded by walls, depicted in a mosaic of the Church of St. John in Gerasa.

Saints John and Cyrus at Menouthis. At the gate, a lamp hangs, perhaps suggesting the oil from the lamp used for miraculous healing. On the opposite side, in the centre of the southern segment another city, probably Memphis, also walled, is represented. In the Church of Saints Peter and Paul at Gerasa (ca. 540), representations of cities appear below the dedicatory inscription of the nave mosaic which records the church's dedication to the Apollonius Peter and Paul by Bishop Anastasius. At the left end an inscription identifies the missing building as the Pharos, whilst immediately to the right is the representation of Alexandria and further Memphis, both walled. Contacts between Gerasa and its churches

⁴⁹⁷ M. Avi-Yonah, *Art in Ancient Palestine. Selected Studies* (Jerusalem 1961), 365, no. 73 and pl. 52.

with Egypt perhaps explain these Egyptian cities in the mosaics. The stylistic design of the compositions in the two churches from Gerasa appears to derive from the iconographic tradition for depicting landscape, rather than from cartography.⁴⁹⁸ However, the monuments chosen as the landmarks of the urban designs were venerated Christian sites, their presence thus conveying a distinct Christian message and presenting the city in Christian terms. Such representations of cities on church mosaic floors clearly deviate from other urban designs in wall paintings. The latter were part of large narrative scenes from the Old and New Testament, which were depicted on the walls of churches, as in the Basilica of Damokratia in Demetrias (fourth-fifth century).⁴⁹⁹ Moreover, the schematic images of walled cities on church mosaics are contrasted with the idealized cities in St. George at Thessalonica, and in St. Apollinare Nuovo with the representations of Clavis and Ravenna. Nilotic scenes in church mosaic pavements have been viewed either as implying a Christian reinterpretation or as a revival of an earlier artistic tradition.⁵⁰⁰ Since the Nile was considered one of the four rivers of Paradise, artistic motifs associated with representation of the Nile were appropriate for church decoration. Alternatively, representations of cities on floor mosaics may refer to the worldly life and contrast it with the celestial life to which usually wall frescoes alluded.⁵⁰¹ Other, specifically Christian reinterpretations were sometimes defined by inscriptions. As in earlier iconography in catacombs, Egypt is also depicted on church mosaic pavements as a city.⁵⁰² In other cases, the inscription "Egypt" next to a city stands for Memphis, a Hellenistic tradition, or for the fortress of Babylon, now old Cairo.⁵⁰³ Representations of cities are also found on mosaics of secular buildings in the East. For example, in Hierapolis, in a mosaic pavement dating to 450-550 containing a scene of the abduction of Europa, the upper right segment contains a representation of Sidon.⁵⁰⁴ From Diocæsarea (Sephonts) comes a mosaic with a Nilotic scene in a building of the early Byzantine period. It includes a personification of Egypt as a semi-naked female figure, reclining on a basket and holding in her left hand a cornucopia, both basket and cornucopia being filled with fruit. To the right is a mason inscribing numerals on a nilometer. In the lower register appears a city with the inscription "Ἡλιούπολις". Another mosaic in the same building depicting a centaur has the inscription "Ἡλιούπολις".⁵⁰⁵ In the Jewish mosaic of the so-called House of Kyrios Leontis in Sythopolis, capital of the province of Palestina Secunda (middle of the fifth century) Alexandria is depicted with the Nilometer and a personification of river Nile.⁵⁰⁶

The Madaba map in the so-called Church of the Map at Madaba in northern Jordan, dated to after 542, which is the date of the dedication of the Nea Church in Jerusalem identified in the city vignette, is the most famous church mosaic with representations of cities (Figure 10). Its size is 15.7x5.60 m. It is a picture map with representations of cities, towns and villages, mountains, rivers and animals. The

⁴⁹⁸ On the representations of cities in the churches of Gerasa see F. M. Bieleb, *Mosaics in Kraeling Gerasa*, 337-338, 338-339, 341-351; Piccirillo, *Mosaics*, p. 288, figs. 504-505 and 542-545, p. 292, figs. 554, 556, N. Dervit, *L'iconografia architettonica nei mosaici di Giordania*, in M. Piccirillo (ed.), *Mosaici di Giordania* (Roma 1986), 151-156, esp. 151-153 suggests that most of the buildings shown in cities' representations in those and other churches were probably basilicas.

⁴⁹⁹ P. Marroff, *Das frühchristliche Demetrias*, *ArchCh* 3 (1986), 300-301.

⁵⁰⁰ Maguire, *Earth*, 69-72; idem, *The Nile and the Rivers of Paradise*, in Piccirillo and Allura, *The Madaba Mosaic Map*, 179-184, 180-181; Rosenbaum and Ward Perkins, *Pavements*, 67-68.

⁵⁰¹ M. Avi-Yonah, *The Hellenistic Mosaic Pavement*, *JHJ* 22 (1972), 122.

⁵⁰² Ibid., 118-122. Personification of Egypt in the sixth century on ivory box W. F. Volbach, *Epithelien der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz 1979), no. 105, fig. 56; Piccirillo, *Mosaics*, 341, no. 252.

⁵⁰³ A. Henman, *Archäologische Marginalien zur palästinischen Topographie*, *JChO* 5 (1962), 62, L. Rosenthal, *The Iconography of the Fiscal Pavement of Early Byzantine Palestine* (Ann Arbor 1965), 308, 309.

⁵⁰⁴ J. Baily, in *AAO* 37/38 (1987/88), 251-278.

⁵⁰⁵ Z. Weiss and E. Netzer, *Quadrata 24 nos. 95-96* (1991), 113-121.

⁵⁰⁶ N. Zohar, *The House of Kyrios Leontis at Beth Shean*, *JHJ* 16 (1968), 123-134, esp. 128 fig. 4, 131 and pl. 12.

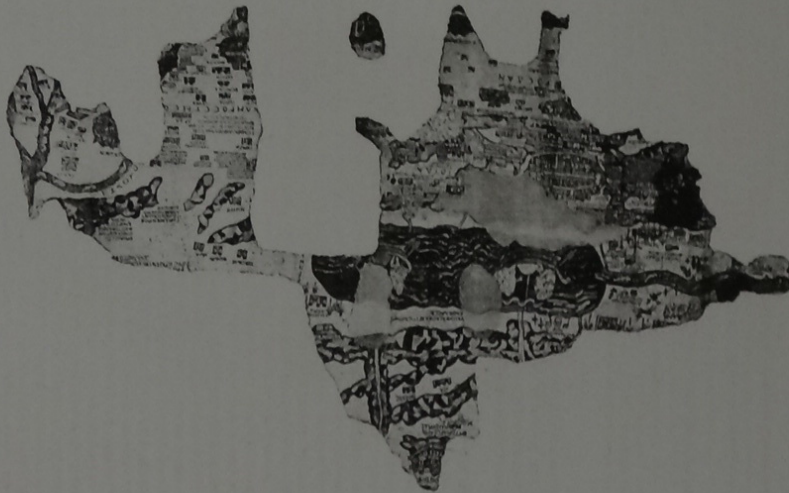


FIG. 10. The Madaba mosaic map.

surviving part contains one hundred fifty seven cities and other sites. This map depicts a purely Christian geography. The sites refer to stories of the Old and the New Testament and Christian churches. The area of Madaba was central in the story of the Promised Land. At Mount Nebo in the territory of Madaba Moses passed his final days. There he delivered his speech, he hid his people from the vision of the Promised Land and died. His cenotaph was located at the site. The area depicted is that of the 12 biblical tribes and the territory around it, which thus contains the land of Canaan promised to Abraham.⁶⁷ The geographical area at the centre of which stands Jerusalem is viewed from the west towards the east. The composition probably derives from the *Oronotomachia* of Eusebius and is based on some road map such as the *Tabula Peutingeriana*.⁶⁸ The geographical situation of Palestine is accurately described in the Madaba map. For example, the many cities in the Negev are represented, while they are missing from the Peutinger Table, since they flourished in the early Byzantine period. Likewise, the territory south of Palestine Tertia (the areas of Petra and Hama in southern Jordan) is little represented, since at the time it had been abandoned to local phylarches.⁶⁹ The larger cities are shown with some buildings, such as Jerusalem, Gaza, Neapolis (modern Nablus in Palestine), Amalek, Pellaion, Charach Maba (modern al-Karak). The smaller cities are depicted with some buildings or colonnaded streets. The centre of the map is Jerusalem, depicted with walls with towers and gates (Fig. 11). The colonnaded cards begins in the plaza inside the Damascus Gate with a column in the middle.

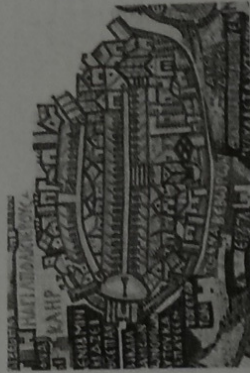


FIG. 11. Jerusalem and the surrounding region.

⁶⁷ J. Borard, *Une lecture de l'Écriture: Le Monde de la Bible* (1987), 33-36; E. Allison, *The Legends of the Madaba Map*, in Piccirilli and Allison, *The Madaba Mosaic Map*, 67-101; I. Shalitz, *The Madaba Mosaic Map Revisited: Some New Observations on its Geography and Meaning*, *ibid.*, 147-157.

⁶⁸ M. Avi-Yonah, *The Madaba Mosaic Map* (Jerusalem 1956), now edited by H. Donner and H. Choppin, *Die Mosaikkarte von Madaba* (Weinheim 1977); see also Piccirilli, *Madaba*, 76-95; H. Donner, *The Madaba Mosaic Map*, in *Thesaurus Sacrum* (1992). But there were certainly other early maps in use, as shown by the sixth-century CE *Tabula Peutingeriana* (1992). On the Pilgrim Maps of the Holy Land and Jerusalem in the sixth century CE, see Piccirilli and Allison, *The Madaba Mosaic Map*, 17-43; E. Weiser, *The Tabula Peutingeriana and the Madaba Map*, *ibid.*, 41-46; L. D. Sykes, *The 'Commentary' of Eusebius and the Madaba Map*, *ibid.*, 115-120; G. Cantini, *Madaba e Gerusalemme: un'interpretazione di una cartina di pellegrinaggio*, *ACAC* 23 (1991), II, 617-629.

⁶⁹ G. W. Downey, *Ramath Amalek* (London 1962), 181-182.

From there a second colonnaded street is depicted along the Tyropoeon Valley and meets in the middle a street from the Lions Gate. At the south end of the valley the Basilica of Zion and the New Church, dedicated to the Theotokos by Justinian, have been identified. Some architectural urban features are also accurately depicted, such as the colonnaded streets, the *exedra* (semi-circular porticoes) and doors and gates with towers.³⁰ The Madaba map, as a Christian artistic creation, is aimed at attracting Christians in the Christian legends associated with sites and monuments. It also creates a visual image of the Christian Palestine in which the cities formed not only important road stations, but were themselves part of the Christian world marked by venerated Christian monuments. The creation of this mosaic might have promoted the rising importance of Jerusalem after the creation of its patriarchate and of the bishopric east of Jordan in the late sixth and in the seventh century.³¹ In the Madaba map, Christian sites and cities are celebrated and are linked with each other in a Christian itinerary. Although the pilgrimage to the Holy Land could have been a major incentive for such artistic creations, nevertheless, these mosaics certainly underline the power of the tradition of the representation of cities. It has been suggested that the city pride and the competition among cities is now expressed in a Christian context.³² Furthermore, a positive and optimistic attitude towards urban life, now profoundly Christianized, is evident in these maps. The Church was the most appropriate place to express this view. The Madaba map may be seen as a declaration of the confidence of the Church in the urban context.

At Umm al-Rasas (Kastrom Mefaa) near Madaba, in the so-called Church of the Lions (dated to 574 or 589) only one representation of a city survives, that of Kastrom Mefaa, between the northern columns of the nave (Figure 12).³³ Outside the walls a small church, part of a large ecclesiastical complex, dating to 586 A.D. is richly decorated with a mosaic pavement. In a band between the central mosaic of the nave and that of the south aisle, are depicted a series of four identical female busts, half naked and holding a cornucopia from which pours water. They are symbols of the Seasons. Between them are depicted complexes of buildings with three towers.³⁴ These buildings may represent cities in a context of prosperity, as is suggested by the Seasons with the cornucopia. The tradition of representing cities in panels in borders of large compositions continues well into the seventh and eighth centuries. In the pavement mosaic of the Church of St. John the Baptist at Khirbat al-Samra (a. 639), half way between Philadelphia and Bosra in the province of Arabia, two representations of walled cities survive with polygonal fortifications. Inside the walls the dominating buildings adorned with cupolas and crosses are obviously churches.³⁵ The inner border of the central mosaic floor of the church at Ma'in (ancient Belemous near Madaba to the southwest) dates to the Umayyad period (719/720) and contains a long series of representations of cities and villages on the banks of Jordan river (Figure 13). Originally there must have been twenty four buildings representing cities, of which only eleven remain, separated from each other by stylized trees: Nicopolis, Eleutheropolis, Ascalon, Maiorunum, Gaza, Oltros, Chirrach Maba, Acropolis (modern Rabbah), Gadara, Ebovota (modern Habis) and Belemounta (modern

³⁰ G. Ortal, *Cartografia e urbanistica nella "Cena di Madaba"*, *Palazzo Reale di storia dell'architettura* (Milan, Roma) 14 (1989), 15-46, esp. 16; R. Pini, *Compositio*, *Ona, edifici e strutture architettoniche nei mosaici pavimentali del cinquesimo Ordine*, *Monumenti della Scuola di Roma* 1989-1994, 159-201; N. Dowd, *Essays on the significance of the vignettes topographical, in Piniello and Milano*, *The Madaba Mosaic Map*, 134-146; F. Teller, *The Holy City of Jerusalem in the Madaba Map*, *ibid.*, 155-163; W. Pöhl, *The Representation of the Lion Allegory City in the Madaba Map*, *The Meaning of the cards in the Jerusalem vignettes*, *ibid.*, 164-171.

³¹ J. Dronetti-Vidale, *La carte de Madaba: cartographie archéologique et topographique*, *Revue Biblique* 95 (1988), 519-542.

³² P. L. Geller, *L'urbanisme de la cité et la carte de Madaba*, in Piniello and Milano, *The Madaba Mosaic Map*, 255-277.

³³ Piniello, *Monumenti*, 242-243 and figs. 394, 397.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 304-305, figs. 395, 396, 399. For J. B. Hensler, *Chirach Maba* 1981-1982, *Symposium* 61 (1985), 311. These images of cities were either decorative or allegorical representations of Jerusalem. *Belemounta* or *Rabbah*.

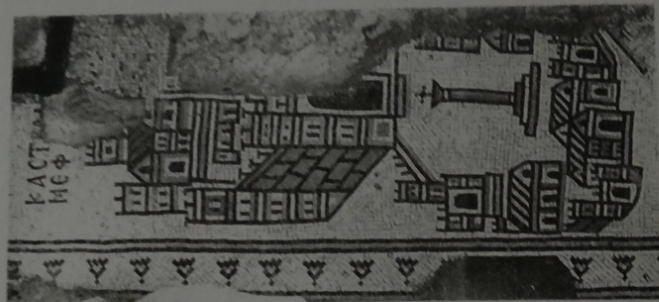


FIG. 12. Umm al-Rasas (Kastrom Mefaa). Church of the Lions.

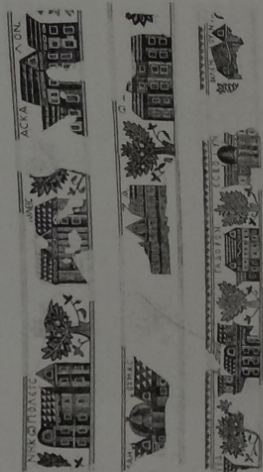


FIG. 13. Representations of cities and villages from Ma'in, ancient Belemos, near Madaba.

Ma'in) and they are shown as large rectangular buildings.⁷⁶ Back at Umm al-Rasas (Kastron Mefaa) the large mosaic floor of the Church of St. Stephanus, paved in the eighth century contains representations of cities surviving intact in two borders (Figure 14).⁷⁷ The first zone lies around the central oblong mosaic panel decorated with vine scrolls and containing images of animals and men engaged in various activities, hunting, agricultural and pastoral. The zone contains Nilotic scenes and includes ten Egyptian cities: Tamiathis, Panoua, Pelusium, Antinoou, Heraklion, Alexandria, Kasin, Thebes, Cyropolis, Psoudionoum. To the right and left of this border are two other bands between the columns with representations of Palestinian cities. In the north border between the columns are depicted eight cities west of Jordan river, Jerusalem, Neapolis, Sebaste, Caesarea Maritima (Figure 15), Diospolis, Eleutheropolis, Ascalon and Gaza. In the corresponding south intercolumnar border are represented seven cities east of Jordan river: Kastron Mefaa, shown in two panels (Figure 16), Philadelpia (modern Amman), Madaba, Esbounta, Belemos, Azoropolis and Charach Maba. That these representations of cities were realistic can be seen from the depiction of Kastron Mefaa showing a column surmounted by a cross, just outside the city gate, in the Church of St. Stephanus and in the Church of the Lions.⁷⁸ (Figures 12 and 16). The villages Limbon and Diklaton depicted on the mosaics of the aisles are connected with the benefactors who are represented there. The representation of the city of Neapolis by the temple of Zeus Hypsistos is particularly striking (Figure 17).

While the mosaics with these motifs of cities usually decorate ecclesiastical buildings, there are other examples in which the symbolism is reversed. On a fabric from Egypt, the city of Antioch is symbolized by its churches on the borders of a central scene depicting Daniel between the lions visited by the prophet Habakkuk. The churches, identified by inscriptions some of which are poorly preserved, are the Great Church, and the martyria of Saints Michael, Stephanus, Sosanna, Acacius and perhaps Victor, and the church of Keraiaon. The composition has been interpreted as alluding to the destruction of

⁷⁶ Piccirilli, *Mosaics*, 35-36, 201, figs. 303-310.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 233, 236-239, figs. 344-354, 360-387; N. Drost, *Le rappresentazioni architettoniche*, in Piccirilli and Allara, *Umm al-Rasas* (165-226), shown that the buildings represented in these cities were Christian buildings. 201 ff.

⁷⁸ See infra pp. 230, 468.

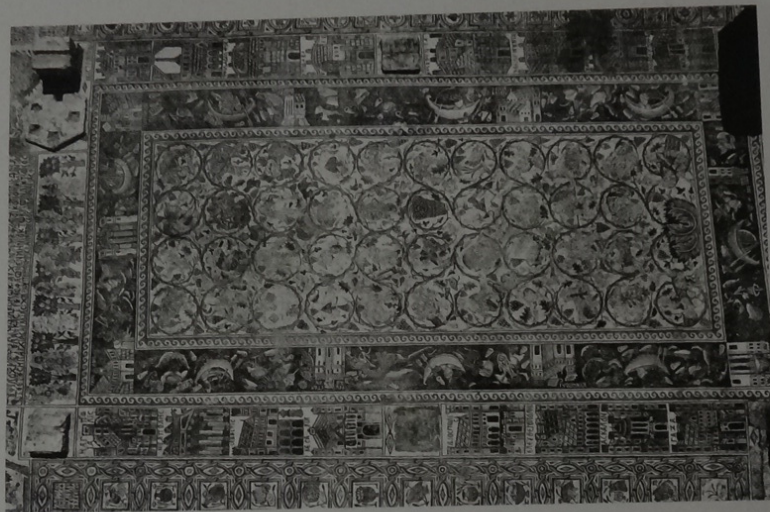


FIG. 14. Floor mosaic of the Church of St. Stephanus at Umm al-Rasas (Kastron Mefaa) with representations of cities in the two borders.



FIG. 15. Representations of Jerusalem, Nicaea, Severus and Calcedon from the floor mosaic of the Church of St. Stephen at Urmi in Rome.

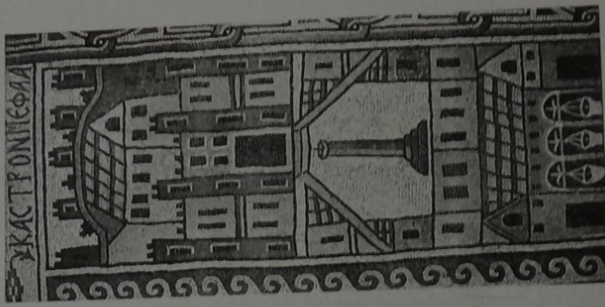


FIG. 16. Kastron Melita, from the floor mosaic of the Church of St. Stephen at Urmi in Rome.



FIG. 17. The city of Neapolis represented by the temple of Zeus Hypsistos, depicted on the floor mosaic of the Church of St. Stephanus at Umm al-Rasas.

Antioch by the Persians in 540. Just as David was persecuted at the orders of Darius, so Antioch was pillaged by the Persians. The churches depicted would have been restored after their destruction in 540.⁷⁰⁹

The representation of cities in churches became very fashionable in the fifth and sixth centuries. Bishop St. Lawrence of Sipontum in Italy invited artists from Byzantium to decorate his church. The composition included representations of churches which depended on Sipontum set around the depictions of Sipontum and Gargano.⁷¹⁰ The bishop thus made clear the increasing power of his Church over the cities through their visual images. But further to the west the image of the city in art declined from the fourth to sixth centuries.⁷¹¹ Obviously the specific historical circumstances in each geographical area are reflected in the selection of artistic models. In the East, while the tradition was maintained in Palestinian churches in the Umayyad period up to the eighth century, in manuscripts it is not found after the sixth century, although it reappears later in the ninth, a phenomenon also observed in the West.⁷¹² This coincides with the ruralization of the Byzantine empire and the decline of cities. In the seventh and eighth centuries Byzantine artists and their patrons showed no interest in cities. The coincidence is too strong to suggest a change in artistic preferences alone.

Personifications of cities

Personifications of cities in art continue the Hellenistic and Roman tradition, to which Christian symbols are now added. Given the fact that there was a constant circulation of ideas and motifs between the literary production and the visual arts, it is not surprising to find that the city's iconography and its literary descriptions reflect each other in the same context. In an aristocratic house at Halikarnassus (ca. 450-500), a mosaic floor contains the personifications of Halikarnassus, Alexandria and Berytus, depicted as female busts set in medallions, while an inscription evokes similarities to the language of *Noëma/Dionysiaca*. Indeed, these representations date to the time of *Noëma* or a little later.⁷¹³ The room may have been the official entrance to the house that included an audience or reception room. The type of the city personification is that of the Tyche, the goddess of the city that ensures its prosperity and happiness. In Antioch there was a temple dedicated to the city's Tyche, the Tycheion, of which Libanius wrote an *ekphrasis*, describing its lavish decoration. Situated in the middle of the city, it contained the statues of the twelve gods and in the middle that of the Tyche. This was shown crowned by the Earth, and in its turn the Tyche crowned Alexander. A statue of Charis invoked the gracious nature of the land. On the top was set the statue of the city's founder. Statues of Nike flanked the Tyche and in the middle bronze poles had inscribed the city's customs (*νόμοι*).⁷¹⁴

⁷⁰⁹ P.-L. Cuq, *Un témoignage sur des églises d'Antioche*, *Syria* 65 (1968), 385-388.

⁷¹⁰ G. Bertaux, *L'Art dans l'Italie Méridionale* (Paris 1964), I, 66-67, A453, *Fabr.* II, p. 79, c. 14.

⁷¹¹ In Spain representations of cities in mosaics, sarcophagi and other monuments are rare, while, not unexpectedly, those of villas in rural settings are numerous. N. Burtal (Aix), *L'image littéraire de la ville dans la peinture ibérique pendant l'antiquité tardive*, *ACAC* 27 (1986), 1288-1298. For the changes in the representation of cities in the West in Late Antiquity and in the early Middle Ages, where there is an increasing emphasis on official scenes and personae, instead of scenes of the city, and for the survival of the image of the Tyche of the city see C. Bertaux, *Visual Images of the Town in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, in Brogiolo and Ward-Perkins, *The Idea*, 127-148.

⁷¹² Ehrensprenger-Katz, *Representations*, 26, 27.

⁷¹³ B. Poulsen, *The city personifications in the Late "Roman Villa" in Halikarnassus*, in S. Inger and B. Poulsen (eds.), *Patron and Power in Late Antiquity* (Odense, Denmark 1997), 9-29. For an analysis in a broader context of the position of the upper class see also R. Leakey-Newby, *Personifications and personae in Late Antique mosaics from the Greek East*, in Stafford and Harris, *Personification*, 221-240.

⁷¹⁴ Libanius, *Discourses* 22 (VIII, 528-531).

From the early Byzantine period are known several representations of city personifications of the type of the Tyche (supra, p. 89, Figure 4). This image of the Tyche was not maintained merely as an artistic convention, as an ornamental motif in artistic compositions. The belief of the inhabitants in the Tyche of the city is attested in inscriptions marked with the sign of the cross.¹⁵² In the *Life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger* the inhabitants of Antioch worship the city's Tyche up to the time of the saint.¹⁵³ Tyche and Tycheion are also recorded in inscriptions in villages in the Hauran.¹⁵⁴

The so-called Hippolytus Hall of a wealthy house at Madaba dating to the first half of the sixth century has a mosaic pavement decorated with a large central composition of which two sections survive (Figure 18). In the first one the figures of Phaedra and Hippolytus with maidens and servants are depicted, in the second Adonis, Aphrodite, Cupids, Graces and Agreioi (Kroticci). The interior border is decorated with acanthus scrolls and hunting and pastoral scenes. At the corners are depicted personifications of the Seasons of the Tyche type, in the form of female busts wearing towered crowns and holding cornucopia. In the exterior border appear personifications of three cities, Rome, Gregoria and Madaba, next to two sea-monsters and birds (Figure 19). They are represented as the Tyche type, all seated, Rome holding the cornucopia, Gregoria with a basket with flowers, and Madaba with two flowers. They all wear crowns, the first two also have earrings, and in their left hand hold a sceptre with a cross.¹⁵⁵ One is left with the impression that in this composition, so markedly pagan, the crosses were an inevitable concession to a reality that the owners of the house had to accept. A personification of Megalopolis in the Peloponnese is also known from a mosaic floor, now lost. She was shown wearing a crown with three towers, and earrings. The mosaic laid on the floor of a pi-shaped portico, belonged to an earlier building, incorporated later into an early Christian church.¹⁵⁶ The mosaic pavement of the *exedra* occupying half of the Roman Odeum of Sythopolis behind the west portico of Palladius Street was also decorated with a medallion with the city's Tyche with a crown with towers holding a cornucopia (Figure 20).¹⁵⁷ From the so-called *Maison du Cerf* in Apamea in Syria comes a mosaic with the representation of the city's Tyche in a medallion 2.20 m in diameter with walled crown, holding cornucopia in the left arm and a branch in the right hand. In the folding of her dress on the front are shown many fruits, including some pomegranates (end of the fifth or early sixth century).¹⁵⁸ The motif of the city's Tyche appears to have survived until late in Egypt, too.¹⁵⁹ In a sixth-century ivory relief from the cathedral of Aschen, the Tyche of Alexandria is shown as Isis. She wears a modius (grain measure) as a crown, she holds the cornucopia in her left arm, supporting a small temple of Horus, and in her right hand she holds a cornucopia. She is surrounded by dancers, erotes playing the flute and a small Pan.

The representation of the city of Theodosias on the mosaic floor of the East Church at Qast-el-Lebia in Libya is loaded with symbolism. It shows how ancient motifs could be used in the Justinianic



FIG. 18. The mosaic in the Hippolytus Hall at Madaba with representations of mythological figures (Phaedra, Hippolytus, Adonis, Aphrodite, Cupids, Graces and Agreioi). Seasons of the Tyche type at the corners, and personifications of Rome, Gregoria and Madaba.



FIG. 19. Representations of Rome, Gregoria and Madaba on the mosaic floor of the Hippolytus Hall.

¹⁵² For example, D. Kolbe, *Tyche und das Kreuz Christi als antike Symbole menschlichen Lebens in einer frühchristlichen Inschrift aus Ephesos, Festschrift für Frau Lohr* (Vienna 1967), 96-102.

¹⁵³ See supra, p. 109.

¹⁵⁴ M. Sarras, *L'epigraphie du Hauran dans les archives de W. J. Baskin*, *Journ. 73* (1996), 85.

¹⁵⁵ Phaedra, Madaba, 55-60; also, *Mosaiques*, 96, figs 3, 10, 13, 14, 26, 27; R. Aron-Levy, *A Note on the Iconography of the Personifications in the "Hippolytus mosaic" at Madaba*, *Journ. 46* (1996), 363-374 suggests that perhaps Gregoria was a local bear-baiter, rather than a city personification.

¹⁵⁶ P. Amisakopoulos-Azou, with the collaboration of E. Prikazidou, *Στοιχείων τῆς μεσαιωνικῆς ἀρχαιολογίας ἐκ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἁγίας Εὐφροσύνης ἐν Τριφυλίᾳ* (Thessalonika 1987), 71 n. 37.

¹⁵⁷ *Mosaiques*, 95-107, 105, 19.

¹⁵⁸ Ch. Bailey, *Syria 60* (1963), 295; also, *Nouvelles découvertes d'Apamée: fortifications et médailles (V^e-VI^e siècles)*, in *XX Colloque international sobre mosaicas antigas, Palencia-Mérida, Octubre 1990*, 187-199.

¹⁵⁹ K. Wessel, *Koptische Kunst: Die Ikonotik in Ägypten* (Bonn 1963), 10 and pl. 2.

FIG. 20. The Tyche of Sythopolis, from the *endia* of Palladius Street.

era to convey a contemporary message in a Christian environment. The mosaic occupies the east part of the nave located off-centre towards the entrance of the baptistery. It is divided into squares with frames of looped circles containing various iconographic compositions (Figure 21). In the squares are depicted various animals, marine life and sea-monsters, four river gods, Geon, Phison, Euphrates and Tigris, the nymph Castalia, a horseman, the facade of a building perhaps a church, a fortress with six towers and a gate, the god Pan flanked by trees walking to the right and with a pedum with wings on his shoulder and a shell-shaped cup on his right hand, a shepherd, Triton, the Pharus and a boat (Figure 22).

In the central square of the upper row is represented a fortified city with the inscription 'ἡ πόλις τοῦ Θεοδοσίου' (Figure 23). According to Procopius, the city was renovated by Justinian. Previously called Vaga, it was renamed Theodorias in honour of the empress Theodora.⁷⁵⁹ A mosaic inscription of the church dates its construction to 539-540.⁷⁶⁰ The panel on the left contains the personification of Kiosyphic (Decoration) as a standing female figure with a censor towards the city, that to the right the personification of Kriosy (Foundation),⁷⁶¹ extending a crown towards the city. Below is depicted the personification of 'Avervionis' (Renewal), in the form of a female bust with a basket with fruits. She is shown framed by a structure resembling a ciborium with two columns and a scalloped conch above an architrave. On both sides of the figure are curtains whose ends are tied to the columns.⁷⁶² The imperial renovation of the city is thus projected by the church and is glorified in an ecclesiastical context. It has been suggested that this underlines the effort of the Church, particularly in the border areas of the empire, to strengthen its position by promoting the presence of the state. The composition of the Anacostia represented like the pagan Tyche of the city together with the personifications of Kosmesia and Kiosia honouring the city, directly derives from earlier pagan prototypes. The figure of Kosmesia is the counterpart of the figures of pagan priests who hold the censor toward the Tyche of the city, whilst the figure of Kiosia offering the crown to Theodorias corresponds to Victory in pagan compositions. But while the latter symbolized the eternal Tyche of the city, constantly renovated, the figure of Kiosia in the church of Our-el-Leban symbolizes the specific renovation of the city by Justinian.⁷⁶³ The image of the city itself with its fortifications points to the reconstruction work of Justinian.⁷⁶⁴ The Anacostia may also have been understood to represent the city's spiritual renewal through the conversion of its inhabitants to Christianity.⁷⁶⁵ The depiction of the god Pan on the same mosaic floor, placed slightly off-centre closer to the door of the baptistery, suggests Christian symbolism. The newly baptized Christians walking on the image of the pagan god are denouncing paganism.⁷⁶⁶ The representation of Castalia as a woman reclining with her jar turned down, and of the rivers corresponding to the rivers of Paradise have been variously interpreted.⁷⁶⁷ They

⁷⁵⁹ Procopius, *De aedificiis* VI.5.12-14.

⁷⁶⁰ ABBÉ-Rosenbaum and Ward-Perkins, *Pavement*, 146-148.

⁷⁶¹ Personification of Kiosy and Kosmesia is also found on the mosaic pavement of the church of Ras-el-Hail also in Cyrenae. ABBÉ-Rosenbaum and Ward-Perkins, *Pavement*, 40-41, 140-141, and pls. 53, 102. See also a mosaic with a personification of Kiosy at the Metropolitan Museum, dated to the first half of the sixth century. H. Evans, *Personification of Kiosy (Foundation)*, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 56.2 (1998), 15. See also again, p. 70, FIGURE 5.

⁷⁶² ABBÉ-Rosenbaum and Ward-Perkins, *Pavement*, 121-133, fig. 10 (p. 122), and plates 5-17.

⁷⁶³ A. Grabar, *Une nouvelle interprétation de certaines images de la mosaïque de pavement de Our-el-Leban (Libye)*, *CRAI* 1969, 264-278, esp. 266-268, 273. See also ABBÉ-Rosenbaum and Ward-Perkins, *Pavement*, 33-37, 123 and for an overall discussion of the Christian symbolism of the mosaic see M. Gaudenzi, *La più antica catechesi figurata: il grande mosaico della basilica di Our El-Liban in Cirenaica*, *Mus. Acc. Linc.*, ser. VII, 187 (Rome 1975), 659-686.

⁷⁶⁴ Maguire, *Earth*, 30-35; ABBÉ-Rosenbaum and Ward-Perkins, *Pavement*, 33-37; J. Engemann, *Design and Belonging*.

Prächristliche Bilderwerke (Darmstadt 1987), 134-138.

⁷⁶⁵ H. Sarrak, *Aspects of the Classical Tradition in Byzantium* (Tübingen 1985), 28.

⁷⁶⁶ ABBÉ-Rosenbaum and Ward-Perkins, *Pavement*, 37-40.

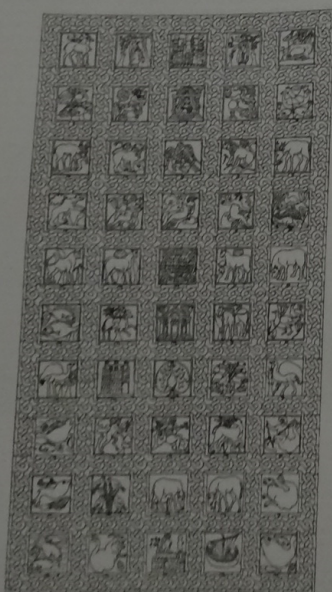


FIG. 21. Justinianic mosaic pavement of the nave of the East Church at Qasr el-Labna (Theodorias) in Libya.

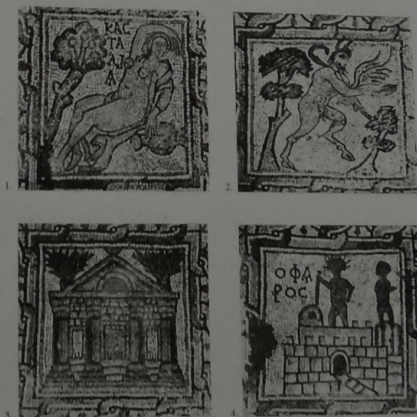


FIG. 22. Segments of the mosaic pavement of the East Church at Qasr el-Labna (Theodorias).
1. Personification of Castalia. 2. Pan. 3. A pagan temple. 4. Pharos.

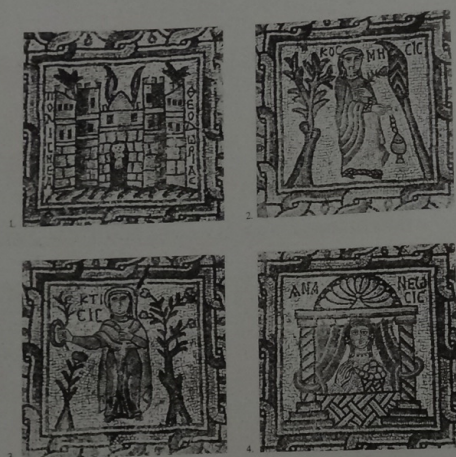


FIG. 23. Segments of the mosaic pavement of the East Church at Qasr-el-Lebia (Theodorias).
1. The city of Theodorias. 2. Personification of Komesia. 3. Personification of Komesia.
4. Personification of Ananias.

may symbolize the closing of the oracle at Daphne and allude to the victory of Christianity. Thus the Ananias of the city is the counterpart of the spiritual ananias of the newly baptized Christians. The imagery of the city's *renovatio* expands to include Christian personal *renovatio*. Other representations of cities are found incorporated in hunting and animal scenes of the cathedral and the central church of Cyrene.⁷⁵

Personifications of the capitals Rome and Constantinople are depicted on consular ivory diptychs well into the sixth century, those of Clementinus (a. 513), Magnus (a. 518) and Orestes (a. 530) being examples. Constantinople is marked with the letter A for the city's poetic name, *Anthonia*.⁷⁶ Such objects conveyed a specific political message and, being produced for members of the upper class, maintained the ancient iconographic tradition longer than other objects. They are found on reliefs, such as the obelisk of Theodorias. In the sixth century Tyche are represented above the charioteer Porphyrius in one of the houses in the hippodrome. They stand for the cities of Nicomedia, Berytus and perhaps Constantinople.⁷⁷ The Tyche type continues to figure on solidi until the reign of Justin II. At that period the Tyche on the solidi, shown with a helmet, a spear and the globe with cross, was interpreted by the Byzantines as Aphrodite. But the Tyche of the city is also found on other objects, for example, sculptured on a tablet probably from Salamis-Constantia in Cyprus, or on a comb of the Benaki Museum in Athens (fifth-sixth century) or as furniture ornaments.⁷⁸ A small marble medallion with a crowned Tyche from a rural church of St. Bacchus at Kh. Sherik, identified with Betomelgeris near Haditha in Israel, in the area of Diospolis, bears an inscription with the name of a person who was probably a governor in whose time the medallion was donated to the church. The date of the medallion with the Tyche is late, 582 A.D.⁷⁹ On a gold vessel from the hoard from Vrap, south of Dyrachium, now in the Metropolitan Museum, the four female figures with walled crowns are identified by inscriptions on the border as Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria and Cyprus. They probably represent bishoprics. The type of the chalice dates to the sixth-seventh centuries. The similarity of the iconographic type of the two capitals also testifies to a date after the middle of the sixth century. While the figures of the two capitals hold orbs, all hold a sceptre. The persistence of the image of the Tyche is remarkable.⁸⁰

The representation of city personifications in churches in the sixth century and later, and other objects as well, is not an isolated artistic fashion, but it coincides with a general trend towards creating a broad repertoire of personifications, such as those drawn from nature. They appear in the second half of the fifth century and were further developed during the sixth. Such compositions include portraits of months, the seasons, the earth, the sea, the rivers of Paradise, the Castalia fountain in the church at Qasr-el-Lebia. Although such concepts were attacked in the fourth century as being derived from paganism, by the fifth and sixth centuries they had been given a Christian reinterpretation, that they derived from God and there were manifestations of divine power.⁸¹ An interpretation of personification of the elements of nature in Christian literature is offered by Severus: "But, in order that the account may be clearer, he (John Chrysostom) also personifies the whole of this world, as the prophets too do,

⁷⁵ Ibid., pls. 39, 40, 1, 43, 1, 70, 2, and p. 58.

⁷⁶ G. Buhl, *Constantinople und Rom: Stadtpersonifikationen der Spätantike* (Zürich 1965), 197-217.

⁷⁷ Cameron, *Porphyrius*, 28-30; A. Grabar, *Sculptures byzantines de Constantinople* (IV-XV siècles) (Paris 1963), 25-29 (pl. V.4).

⁷⁸ G. Roux, *Tableaux chrétiens en marbre découverts à Salamine, Salamine de Chypre IV, Anthologie Salaminienne* (Paris 1977), 136-139 and pl. 32, a; W. F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinskulpturen der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Münster 1976), no. 88b (p. 68) and pl. 49; R. Brilliant, *Personifications in Weizmann, Age of Spirituality*, 176-177.

⁷⁹ Dahari, *Betomelgeris*, 248 and plate XII (p. 210); idem, *Herbert Thibaut, Church of St. Bacchus, ESI 18* (1968), 67-68.

⁸⁰ For a discussion of these figures and earlier bibliography see Saradi, *Altholia*, 122-124.

⁸¹ H. Maguire, *Christians, Pagans, and the Representation of Nature, Begriffung von Heidentum und Christentum im spätantiken Ägypten, Riggisberger Berichte 1* (1993), 131-146, esp. 147-153.



FIG. 25. View of the Arcadiane in Ephesus leading from the harbour to the theatre.

PART III

THE DISSOLUTION OF ANTIQUE PUBLIC SPACE AND THE TRIUMPH OF PRIVATIZATION

CHAPTER 6

THE TRANSFORMATION OF URBAN PUBLIC SPACE, ADMINISTRATION AND URBAN ÉLITES

But the most conspicuous achievement of Roman architecture was its dominant role in creating, rebuilding, and expanding hundreds of cities and towns – its urban instrumentality.⁷³⁹

Urban architecture and the sources: an introduction

Urban space is defined by the organization of its parts and its architectural appearance. In early Byzantine cities, this was a subject for praise by orators and a cause of pride on the part of their inhabitants. Choricus, in his second *Laudatio* for bishop Marcian, declares that the magnificence of urban buildings, together with the city's climate and the inhabitants' fair habits, made up the excellence of a city.⁷⁴⁰ Such statements were not mere rhetorical exaggeration. The inhabitants of early Byzantine cities inherited from the Romans cities magnificently decorated with public buildings, to serve the public needs of the communities: buildings for municipal administration, concentrated in the agora/forum, colonnaded avenues with sidewalks covered with mosaic pavements and decorated with statues of civic benefactors, emperors and heroes, monumental arches at crossroads and public plazas with imperial statues and symbols of Roman power or of the local civic tradition, temples in prominent positions and libraries, buildings for public spectacles, theatres, amphitheatres, and hippodromes, elaborate water supply systems to serve the citizens' needs for drinking water, and hygiene and to offer pleasure from water fountains, ornamental reflection pools, public and private baths. During the Hellenistic period and the Roman empire, numerous and varied buildings were erected in cities to promote royal and imperial propaganda, cultural values, religion, and political organization. Such buildings also catered the practical needs of urban communities, which enjoyed an advanced and civilized life. Such buildings were magnificent, with elaborate sculptural ornaments, mosaics and paintings. Some, such as water fountains, reflecting pools and porticoes, were built to please the eye. The spectacular remains of certain early Byzantine cities, as, for example, Ephesus and Aphrodisias, offer us glimpses of the magnificence of their architectural and sculptural decoration.⁷⁴¹

⁷³⁹ MacDonald, *Architecture* II, 1.

⁷⁴⁰ Choricus, *Op.* II.5 (p. 29 A-B): 'Ἀγέρῃ τῶν αὐτῶν αἰσίων ἀγορῶν καὶ ὑγιῶν, δέξασθαι ἀνθρώπων ἐξ ἑσπέρης τοῦ ποταμοῦ, οὐλοδογῶντων ἐν ἀφῆστον, ὑγιῶν, οὐλοδογῶντων.'

THE TRANSFORMATION OF URBAN PUBLIC SPACE

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In addition to assuming a practical function, architecture plays a symbolic role, both political and religious. It expresses social realities, for it differentiates social groups by revealing their special interests and economic dynamics. It defines and distinguishes public space from private, a matter of particular interest during the period under examination. The organization of urban space and the arrangement of the parts within each urban architectural unit reveal social identities and practical needs. They also illustrate changing modes of expression, aesthetic principles and ideological concepts. Artistic trends are also intricately related to the urban space. They reflect social phenomena. They express new concepts of space, new attitudes to art, changing responses on the part of the viewer, and adjustment to functional needs. Artistic style marks the physical framework in which cities lived. The historical period examined here offers a complex variety of trends consisting of surviving classicizing themes and motifs set next to less disciplined order in architecture, marked by variation of the parts, and more abstract forms in figurative art. In the urban context of the sixth century, the new trends coexisted with the remnants of the pagan past. The interplay between old and new in the urban space, the adjustments and compromises made, the accommodation of opposing trends all express aspects of sixth-century urbanism. They define it as the period in which earlier trends were crystallized and older traditions faded away or merged with the new dynamics of city life.⁷⁴²

Urban buildings concern sixth-century historiography directly. Procopius in his introduction to *Buildings* defines the relevance of the theme to historiography as twofold: the one is practical, the other is symbolic and political. First, he recognizes that the subjects of the empire benefit from works of imperial patronage, and second, that the acknowledgement of such benefit should be preserved for future generations:

Apart from all this, history shows that subjects who have received benefits have proved themselves grateful toward their benefactors, and that they have repaid them with thank-offerings in generous measure; seeing that, while they have profited, it may be, for the moment only by the beneficence of their rulers, they nevertheless preserve their sovereigns' virtue imperishable in the memory of those who are to come after them. Indeed it is through this very service that many men of later times strive after virtue, by emulating the honours of those who have preceded them, and, because they cannot endure censure, are quite likely to shun the basest practices.⁷⁴³

In the sixth century, the inhabitants of Byzantine cities lived in an urban environment very different from that of the fourth century, let alone of the Roman empire. By the sixth century a dramatic change had occurred in urban space. The pagan symbolism of the civic monuments was increasingly suppressed under pressure from Christianity, which created new landmarks in urban centres, namely Christian churches. Socio-economic, administrative and cultural changes imposed new priorities and a radical reorganization of public space. Its transformation, as it adjusted to the new standards and needs, was slow and gradual, starting in the fourth century onwards. At the same time, however, the need for change often conflicted with the profound respect for the ancient architecture of the cities, an attitude which expressed the culture of a venerated past, at least among the educated members of the upper class. When Totila was planning to set Rome on fire and burn down the 'finest and most noteworthy of the buildings' (τὸν οὐλοδογῶντὸν καὶ καλλίστὸν καὶ καὶ ἀριστοτελεστάτον), Belisarius attempted to

⁷⁴² See the remarks of R. Cormack, *The Classical Tradition in the Byzantine Provincial City: the Evidence of Thessalonike and Aphrodisias*, in Muliken and Scott, *Byzantium*, 103-118.

⁷⁴³ Procopius, *De aedificiis* I.1.4-5 (transl. Dewing).

prevent such a destruction in a letter addressed to him in emotional tones. He praises ancient civic monuments as expressions of urban civilized life and as symbols of the greatness of the Roman empire. Procopius praises the inhabitants of Rome for loving their city more than anyone else, and for being "eager to protect all their ancestral treasures and to preserve them, so that nothing of the ancient glory of Rome may be obliterated" (ὅτι καὶ ἡ πόλις ἀγαπᾷ τὰ παλαιὰ νόμιμα).¹⁶⁰ From the perspective of Cassiodorus Variae, we get a different perspective. Cassiodorus displays contempt for the inhabitants of Rome, who lacked respect for the elegant works of the ancient Romans and so inflicted serious damage (*gravissimum damnum*) on them.¹⁶¹ It is clear that in the sixth century the past, as reflected in architecture, was still a powerful presence in the cities.

In chapters two and three we have seen that most of the sixth-century authors adhere to traditional themes and rhetorical conventions in their descriptions of urban space. At the same time, however, they reveal the new function of some urban elements, such as the agora, and new urban features, such as churches or the greater importance of fortifications. In other instances, literary references to urban space are static. They do not take note of the changing features of the urban layout. They do not mention the decay of ancient civic buildings, the changes in porticoes and colonnaded avenues nor do they attest the radical alterations in the domestic space of the upper class. Most of the texts employ antique rhetorical terminology to describe the sixth-century urban setting, thus creating additional difficulties of interpretation. Procopius' *Buildings*, for example, written from an imperial perspective, projects a fossilized image of early Byzantine cities. Procopius identifies the emphasis on the new elements in the urban landscape, the churches and the fortifications, but he avoids any elaboration relating to other alterations in the ancient urban structure. The reader is left with the impression that very little has changed in early Byzantine cities. Procopius' *Buildings* promote the traditional Roman idea of *monumentum* and aims at glorifying the emperor and at inspiring confidence in the future. Under those circumstances, there was no interest in identifying changes which by his time had altered the ancient urban layout. Imperial legislation, however, is concerned with the maintenance of decaying buildings, especially of those serving practical needs of urban communities, and with attempts to find administrative solutions to the problem. Yet such legislation is far from giving a full idea of the scale of the change. Archaeology reveals a very different picture of the urban environment in the early Byzantine period. Excavations show that ancient civic structures were left to decay. They were dilapidated, appropriated by private individuals or by the Church, and converted to other uses to meet new needs. The architectural symbols of the new culture were erected next to the old ones, thus becoming the cities' new landmarks.¹⁶² While literary texts offer sporadic and often confusing information on the changes in urban space, the archaeological evidence reveals details of a profound transformation. Archaeological excavations show that in the sixth century, the dissolution of urban public space, a process that had started in the fourth century, accelerated and was marked by a pronounced trend towards privatization. The literary sources, when studied in this light, complement the picture. They help one to comprehend the new cultural trends and changing attitudes towards the civic public space, by identifying its new functions, and tracing the causes of these developments.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., VIII.22.5. See also *supra*, pp. 86-87.

¹⁶¹ Cassiodorus, *Variae* 7.13.

¹⁶² F. Assenbergh, *Chronique de l'architecture (1970-1981)*, BCH 105 (1981), 736: "Mais tous ces bâtiments appartiennent à une même phase de civilisation matérielle. L'installation dans le sanctuaire de thermes et d'un réservoir, le parage d'une rue à travers le sanctuaire avec des pierres du monument de ce sanctuaire, la construction du stylobate de l'agora romaine et du par à contoured à l'Ouest du sanctuaire avec des blocs de même provenance, tout impose à l'œil l'image d'une ville installée au milieu de pans de murs des monuments du sanctuaire apollinien, — un peu, mais, surtout, surtout, comme les constructions de la Renaissance dans les forêts romaines ou dans le palais de Dioclétien."

Administrative changes: the decline of the curial class and civic finances

In the Roman empire responsibility for financing the construction and maintenance of buildings for the public administration, streets, porticoes, baths, spectacle buildings, water supply system, and walls rested with the *bouletai* (*curiales*, *decurions*).¹⁶³ Their conduct of civic affairs consisted of electing magistrates, collecting taxes for the imperial government, taking care of the city's food supply, and organizing festivals, public spectacles and other civic activities. The construction and maintenance of public buildings were financed mainly from civic revenues from taxes, from properties donated or bequeathed to the cities, and from interest of civic funds. Civic funds deriving from certain sources were allocated to cover specific expenses.¹⁶⁴ However, in the fourth century cities lost part of their revenues, when Constantine and Constantius II confiscated municipal land and taxes and included it in the *res privata*. From the revenues of the confiscated land only one third returned to the cities. The properties of temples, also administered by the civic authorities, were confiscated by Constantine and then given to individuals by Constantine. Civic revenues were restored briefly by Julian, but were again confiscated permanently by Valentinian and Valens. These confiscations affected the ability of the municipalities to maintain municipal buildings and initiate new construction works, while some of the municipal expenses were now borne by the imperial government.¹⁶⁵ The transfer of civic taxes to the imperial treasury has been often interpreted as a policy of greed or as an effort to save funds by cutting excessive expenses and use them to remedy major problems.¹⁶⁶ Liturgies (*munera*) were another major source of revenue for Roman cities. The *munera* were various. Some were the liturgies (*κορυφαία*), funds for organizing public spectacles, and heating the public baths. Others, however, were services to municipalities, such as participation in embassies, supervision of work or political and judicial initiative from which the cities would benefit. The *munera*, of Roman origin, included the collection of taxes, the maintenance of the *curia publica*, and the provision of animals for it, and shipping wheat to Constantinople. In the fourth century, the terminology used for liturgies no longer preserves the classification employed in the preceding period. This is primarily manifested in the Theodosian Code. The change shows that the old municipal charges were becoming obligatory public services, to be assumed under pressure from the state. In the fourth century, some municipal obligations, such as the *curia publica*, the maintenance of streets, the construction of forts, traditionally imposed on the decurions, were transferred to *possessores* (*εὐρυτοί*). Such obligations were assigned by Julian to the landowners of the areas, who, it was thought, had an interest in these public works. Valens made this liturgy a land tax to be imposed on all *possessores*.¹⁶⁷ The conversion of the liturgy into a tax did not by any means make it certain that the funds from the tax would be used for municipal works. At the same time, in order to ensure the civic revenues, the state attempted to direct part of the decurions' properties to the municipalities. From the reign of Constantine, the properties of decurions who died without heirs were given to the cities. In 428 one quarter of the decurions' real estate was transferred to the cities, and by the

¹⁶³ See W. Langhammer, *Die rechtliche und soziale Stellung der Municipales und der Decuriones in der Übergangsphase der Städte vom spätantiken bis zum frühmittelalterlichen Zeitalter* (2. J. Jahrhundert der römischen Kaiserzeit) (Wienbaden 1977), 245-262; Bowman, *The Town Councils*, 87-88.

¹⁶⁴ Liebeschuetz, *Decline*, 170-171, 178-179.

¹⁶⁵ See W. Liebeschuetz, *The End of Antiquity in the Fourth Century A.D.*, *BZ* 52 (1959), 344-356; *idem*, *Antich*, 151-156; Lepelley, *Les cités*, 1, 97-102; Delmaire, *Langues sacres*, 278 ff., 645-657.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 277-278.

¹⁶⁷ Libanius, *Or.* XXV.43 (II.557); Dig. L.4.1 and 18; Petit, *Libanius*, 45-46.

functions. The *pauper* was in charge of civic revenues from loans and civic real estate.⁶¹¹ The *pauper* was also elected by the bishop and laymen. In Justinianic legislation, the *pauper* and the *defensor* were also leading magistrates in the cities.⁶¹² Inscriptions from various cities record that the *pauper* was also responsible for civic works either alone, or together with the governor and the bishop.⁶¹³ Not all cities had a *pauper*; apparently.⁶¹⁴ The new administrative system of the fifth and sixth centuries was not uniform and made allowances for local variations, although Justinianic legislation attempted to establish uniformity. We get glimpses of the duties of the civic officers from inscriptions and the papyri.⁶¹⁵

In the early sixth century, cities still maintained municipal funds derived from civic taxes and from revenue from properties bequeathed or donated to the cities by citizens, or decurions who were obliged by law to transfer to the cities part of their estates.⁶¹⁶ An inscription from Caesarea Maritima dated to the sixth century gives a list of local taxes part of which was allocated to the city's *lexoptoques* for the circus. These are taxes on professionals, trade, habitations and personal taxes (*lato roto ellone*, *noti iustitios*, *noti duxoptoques*, *noti triquetoptoques*, *noti ovoptoques*, *lato ovoptoques*, *lato ovoptoques*). The emperor's *anastasi* takes part of the taxes, but they were allocated back to the city to cover the expenses of the circus.⁶¹⁷ Edict XIII 15-16 of Justinian, regarding the city of Alexandria and its provinces, provides a list of expenses to which was allocated the *exoptoques*, an expert tax, a total of 1,400 gold coins. During the administration of Marcellus, the Prefect of the East, 452 gold coins of this tax were allocated for the hearing of the bulls, 419 for the *anastasi*, and 553 for the collector of the tax for the transportation of the *anastasi*. Later 100 oxen were allocated to the city's *poliastasi*, and 320 to the Prefect of Egypt for the circus horses. Justinian redistributed the amounts for the various expenses differently from the total of 1,889 nomismata, 269 are relieved (*ovoptoques*) on account of the emperor's *philanthropy* (*philanthropy* *noti iustitios* *noti duxoptoques* *noti ovoptoques* *noti ovoptoques*), 1520 are allocated to the Prefect for his salary (*lato roto ellone* *noti iustitios* *noti duxoptoques* *noti ovoptoques*), of which the 320 were to cover the circus expenses, and the remaining 1200 for his own carrying. The other expenses, the hearing of the bulls, for the *anastasi* and the transportation of the *anastasi* is to be covered from other unspecified sources.⁶¹⁸ A late inscription from Caesarea Maritima records the construction of an arch, a wall and a staircase in the so-called Byzantine Epitaph by the *pauper* and *promion* Flavius

⁶¹¹ *CJ* XII 2 (14.28.11.16.18), VIII 22 (14.40.40), Novella 128 16, 18.

⁶¹² *Notae*, The Late Roman Empire, I, 111, 112, 113, 114.

⁶¹³ *Notae*, A New Inscription, D. P. 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

⁶¹⁴ *Notae*, A New Inscription, D. P. 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

⁶¹⁵ *Notae*, A New Inscription, D. P. 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 5

Adrian in the early Byzantine period, inscriptions commemorating public works are not known after the end of the fifth century.⁸⁵⁷ This evidence, however, is not entirely reliable, since the ancient custom of recording public announcements in inscriptional form was gradually abandoned.⁸⁵⁸ There are, however, some exceptions. In Syria and Palestine, the number of inscriptions increased from the fourth to the seventh centuries, in contrast to the Roman imperial period. At Aphrodisias, too, there are more inscriptions than anywhere else regarding public works executed by governors and state officers in the fourth century, but unacceptably in the fifth century and in the early sixth century inscriptions record more private and local benefactors.⁸⁵⁹ A law of the year 538 demanding the emperor's approval for setting up governors' statues may have been the reason for the decline in inscriptions commemorating governors in the cities.⁸⁶⁰ It is clear, therefore, that building activities in the cities were not uniform. However, the overall picture of the archaeological evidence is that of a constant decline in public construction.

Unfortunately, the late inscriptions from Aphrodisias cannot be dated with greater precision than to the late fifth to sixth century in general. The wording of most of the inscriptions is very elaborate and conveys the ancient spirit of civic pride. There are references to the virtue of the honoured men, their many acts of generosity (*euphrosynai*) to the city and their benevolence (*philotimia*).⁸⁶¹ The benefactors are called *euphrosynoi*, *doxotimoi*, *kratimoi*, *philotimoi*, *philotimoi*, *philotimoi*.⁸⁶² The city expresses its gratitude for the benefactors' benevolence by erecting their statue.⁸⁶³ For example, in the late fifth century a lengthy epigram, employing archaic vocabulary, praises a benefactor in these words: "The light of virtue shines even for dead men, who, undertaking many labours for their country, established general benefits. The saying fits Asclepiodotus, for whom this city has dedicated this statue as for a founder. Long time wears away even stone; but the fame of Asclepiodotus' virtues is immortal, the number and kind of privileges which he obtained for his country. In addition to all these, let this adjacent structure of the vaulted chamber be counted as well."⁸⁶⁴ In late inscriptions from Aphrodisias we find also two antique notions of the benefactor, disregard for his own wealth, shown by his generosity, and the glory he enjoys in return for his benefaction: "you have disregarded wealth and obtained glory. Aphrodisias is reserved for benefactors who are also office holders, especially governors who held the initiative in matters regarding construction at that time. Perhaps the persistence of the ancient civic ideals of the benefactor and the related vocabulary may be explained by the continuous pagan tradition until late in Aphrodisias.⁸⁶⁵ However, in an important change, early Byzantine honorary inscriptions are written in verse. First, this change underlines the importance of the education of the benefactors.

⁸⁵⁷ E. Sironen, *The Late Roman and Early Byzantine Inscriptions of Athens and Attica* (Helsinki 1997), 47, 90, 377.

⁸⁵⁸ C. Lepelly, *Épigraphie et épigraphisme de l'antiquité à nos jours*, in M. Christol and O. Moren (eds.), *Actes du XI^e congrès de l'épigraphie grecque et latine, Nîmes, 4-9 octobre 1992* (Paris 1997), 335-352. See also the remarks of Leveau, *Administration*, 162-166 that the inscriptions indicate the political changes in the area of construction. They result from provincial capitals where the political power of the governors was concentrated and they also show

⁸⁵⁹ *Inscriptions Aphrodisias*, XXV-XXVI.

⁸⁶⁰ *Inscriptions Aphrodisias*, 355-356.

⁸⁶¹ *Inscriptions Aphrodisias*, 63 (soldiers' *euphrosynoi*); for a governor, 87 (governer), 88 (a local citizen).

⁸⁶² *Inscriptions Aphrodisias*, 88, 89, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

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received only second place in terms of praise, usurpation by governors was apparently discouraging to private initiative. Only in Rome were private benefactors found for civic works up until the late fifth and early sixth century.⁶⁵ Once the ancient spirit of civic munificence had disappeared, personal funds were increasingly directed to works of Christian piety.⁶⁶ The phenomenon is attested everywhere in the empire. Papyri show that the various contributions of the Apions to churches were more numerous than to civic institutions. The areas of the Apions' civic contributions were the circus factors, the stables and a new public bath.⁶⁷ The new attitudes of the aristocracy are best observed in Constantinople, where, with very few exceptions, the members of this class do not demonstrate the traditional lavish munificence.⁶⁸ The Constantinopolitan elite, being new and closer to the trends of the age, did not have the tradition of civic benevolence of the Roman aristocracy. A couple of epigrams appear to refer to private benefactors at Aphrodisias in the late period. A certain Hermias paid the large sum of 3,000 solidi for the city's bath and received everlasting fame ($\mu\eta\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha\ \delta\alpha\iota\delta\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha\iota\ \epsilon\gamma\epsilon\tau\epsilon\nu$).⁶⁹ However, it is not certain that the funds were paid for construction work. The gift may have been an endowment for financing the operation of the baths. A certain Philip, son of Herodian, with the title of *administrandus* ($\theta\alpha\upsilon\mu\iota\alpha\sigma\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\varsigma$) was probably acting as a private benefactor. He covered the intercolumniations of the south portico of the agora and was honoured with a statue.⁷⁰ These epigrams to private individuals are much simpler in terms of antique vocabulary in comparison to those honouring officers of the urban or provincial administration. Other examples show how simple the wording of inscriptions was becoming. In Epiphania (modern Hama in Syria), in the province of Syria Secunda, the restoration and enlargement of a winter bath was defrayed from the personal funds of Elias, honoured by the emperor. He also paid the artisans.⁷¹ In Gortyn in the fifth to sixth century, according to an inscription, three individuals cooperated over the renovation of a cistern, and in another inscription, one of them, a certain Georgios, is mentioned as benefactor of the city's water supply system, without, however, any indication of the nature of the work.⁷² In general, inscriptions rarely refer to citizens' $\epsilon\phi\alpha\gamma\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha$. An inscription from Gerasa mentions that a pool or cistern ($\tau\omicron\ \epsilon\gamma\gamma\omega\ \tau\omicron\ \delta\alpha\upsilon\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\ \tau\omicron\ \epsilon\phi\alpha\gamma\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha$) was built through the munificence of the *clarissimus* Sergius ($\epsilon\kappa\ \epsilon\phi\alpha\gamma\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\ \tau\omicron\ \alpha\pi\omicron\lambda\alpha\mu\beta\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\ \Sigma\epsilon\rho\gamma\iota\omicron\upsilon$).⁷³ By the end of the sixth century, and at the beginning of the seventh, the change was complete. We no longer find inscriptions praising the munificence of the benefactor in the antique manner. For example, an inscription from Panion (in the province of Europa west of Heraclea on the north shore of the sea of Marmara) dating to this period simply records an unspecified construction ($\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\tau\alpha\ \alpha\epsilon\alpha\iota\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\ \rho\iota\theta\omicron\varsigma$ of Marmara) by the local inhabitants with funds and the help ($\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\ \tau\omicron\ \sigma\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon\delta\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha\iota$) *sui* $\alpha\pi\omicron\sigma\alpha\sigma\theta\epsilon\iota$) of the bishop and a certain $\lambda\alpha\upsilon\alpha\kappa\tau\omicron\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ $\alpha\pi\omicron\tau\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\ \Gamma\epsilon\omega\upsilon\gamma\iota\omicron\varsigma$. Since no office is mentioned, the *benefactor* was probably a private benefactor.⁷⁴ In this text there is no reference to the pride or the competitive spirit of the *Aetioi*. The wording is so vague that neither the type of the construction nor the kind of contribution can be discerned.

⁶⁵ Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity*, 18–21; *Building: A construction*, 171.

⁶⁶ See the analysis of Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity*, 65–70.

⁶⁷ *Adrian, The City*, 313–314.

⁶⁸ *Justin, The Later Roman Empire*, 706; *Al. Cameron, Theodosius*, 17 (1978), 269–286, esp. 263.

⁶⁹ *Roscher's Lexikon*, no. 74.

⁷⁰ *Inschr.*, no. 66 (pp. 108–109).

⁷¹ *Inschr.*, no. 1999. *Temple*, 166, *entrances*.

⁷² *Inschr.*, no. 32, 33.

⁷³ *Di. Segni, Urban building*, 312.

⁷⁴ *Waller, Inscriptions*, no. 278 (p. 470); *Di. Segni, Urban building*, 326–327.

⁷⁵ *Audrich, Inscriptions*, 324–327.

The new leaders of the urban communities, the bishop and the wealthy landowners (*protes, protores, katores*), had other priorities, very different from those of the earlier bouleuterai. The *protes* had lost the competitive spirit that motivated the bouleuterai in the past. Private interest and corruption on the part of the urban leaders and of the officers of state administration is repeatedly stressed in the texts. On the other hand, the bishops were primarily interested in works of a Christian character. They were also concerned with the practical needs of their flock. The overall impression given by the epigraphic evidence is that the production of honorific inscriptions commemorating local benefactors was in decline, while the majority commemorate emperors and governors.⁷⁶ Justinian's laws cited above indicate that those appointed to administer the civic funds for the needs of the urban communities did not perform liturgies. Rather, they performed a public duty as civil officers. This development started in the fourth century, when the provincial governors became more and more involved in carrying out public works.⁷⁷ The involvement of provincial governors in authorizing and supervising public works deprived the deans of an intimate which in the past had given them authority and prestige in cities. The curial duties and the liturgies had become a burden to be avoided. As early as 465/6, legislation showed flexibility regarding the obligations of private contributions. Private benefactors who have promised to erect a public building at their own expenses are not forced to complete the work. Their heirs are not considered liable if the work was not performed or if the entire amount of money promised has not been spent. In order to encourage potential benefactors, no other obligations were imposed on such citizens or on their children.⁷⁸

Ancient euergetism derived from the ancient way of life and ancient values, and it was perceived as directly connected with ancient culture. In the fifth century, the philosopher Proclus was not involved in civic life, because he was taken up with philosophy. He urged, however, Archelaos, grandson of the philosopher Plutarch, to involve himself in the city's affairs, to offer his services to citizens, and make benefactions. Proclus himself bequeathed his fortune to his native city and to Athens.⁷⁹ In the sixth century, this spirit was lost. It is true that Justinian's legislation refers to private munificence ($\phi\iota\lambda\alpha\theta\epsilon\rho\iota\alpha\ \delta\alpha\upsilon\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\ \eta\ \alpha\epsilon\tau\iota\ \epsilon\gamma\gamma\omega\ \epsilon\tau\epsilon\ \mu\alpha\lambda\alpha\sigma\ \eta\ \alpha\epsilon\tau\iota\ \delta\alpha\upsilon\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\ \epsilon\phi\alpha\gamma\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron$),⁸⁰ although the number of individuals willing to contribute to their communities with private funds was very small. John Lydos remarks that the ancient tradition of public display and public generosity was no longer to be found and attributes the change to individualistic trends on the part of the members of the upper class: 'Yet such philanthropy ($\phi\iota\lambda\alpha\theta\epsilon\rho\iota\alpha$), however, did make its way to our Rome, too, but thereafter it did not become established because the illustrious men among us display the superiority of their fortune only towards themselves' ($\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\ \epsilon\upsilon\ \phi\iota\lambda\alpha\theta\epsilon\rho\iota\alpha\ \epsilon\tau\epsilon\varsigma\ \tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\alpha\ \tau\omicron\ \pi\alpha\upsilon\sigma\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\ \epsilon\tau\epsilon\ \tau\omicron\ \delta\alpha\upsilon\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\ \delta\alpha\upsilon\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron$).⁸¹ By now, we are far from the spirit of ancient generosity, according to which generous spending of money implied virtue of some kind.⁸²

⁷⁶ Lewin, *Urban public building*, 30–31; *idem, Stud.*, 128–135; *Th. Acanthopolis, A Quantitative Survey of the Christianization of Ephesus and Thessalonica*, in *Epistolae* (1985), 177; *Di. Segni, Urban building*, 312, 320–331.

⁷⁷ See Bowman, *The Town Council*, 87–90; *Building: A construction*, 196–171.

⁷⁸ *See Bowman, The Town Council*, 87–90; *Building: A construction*, 196–171. *Justinian's laws* cited above indicate that those appointed to administer the civic funds for the needs of the urban communities did not perform liturgies. Rather, they performed a public duty as civil officers. This development started in the fourth century, when the provincial governors became more and more involved in carrying out public works. The involvement of provincial governors in authorizing and supervising public works deprived the deans of an intimate which in the past had given them authority and prestige in cities. The curial duties and the liturgies had become a burden to be avoided. As early as 465/6, legislation showed flexibility regarding the obligations of private contributions. Private benefactors who have promised to erect a public building at their own expenses are not forced to complete the work. Their heirs are not considered liable if the work was not performed or if the entire amount of money promised has not been spent. In order to encourage potential benefactors, no other obligations were imposed on such citizens or on their children.

⁷⁹ *John Lydos, De magistratibus*, 120 (p. 34, 20–22).

⁸⁰ *Justinian's laws*, cited above.

⁸¹ *John Lydos, De magistratibus*, 120 (p. 34, 20–22).

⁸² *Justinian's laws*, cited above.

The corporations and the *okoi*: municipal obligations

Corporations of professionals, such as jewellers and *makellarioi*, contributed to works of benefit to urban communities.⁶⁷ This was a form of liturgy imposed on guilds. Libanius mentions the obligation on shopkeepers to maintain the porticoes and clean the drains and regards them as *corvées*.⁶⁸ A series of imperial regulations refers to civic obligations (*mousai*) imposed on artisans, although many were excluded by a law of Constantine.⁶⁹ Early in the fifth century the properties of the temples in the cities were given to the *municipes* and the guilds on perpetual lease. Many public buildings, including temple properties, had been abandoned and were in a state of decay. If they were not subject to tax assessment, they were given to decurions and the guilds in order to meet their obligations towards the cities.⁷⁰ This is the obvious explanation for the proliferation of shops and workshops in all sorts of public buildings in the early Byzantine period.⁷¹

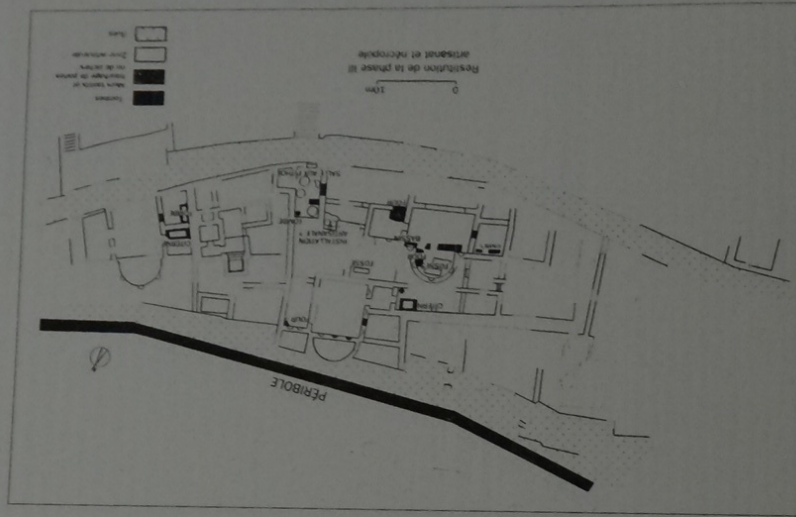
Characteristic of the administrative changes that had occurred is the involvement of *okoi* in municipal activities.⁷² Pappi indicate that from the fifth century *okoi*, ecclesiastical institutions and guilds performed various services for the central government and had absorbed some of the civic duties of the earlier decurions such as providing public officers (*epitai*), and serving in the offices of *proedrai*, *legisno* and *psarrai*. It remains unknown how much the system was generalized and whether it had wider applications in the other provinces outside Egypt. Nor is the process of this development certain. It would appear that civic duties were imposed on the *okoi*. Perhaps the properties to which the municipal liturgies were attached belonged to decurions, and by the sixth century had been transferred to *okoi* through various kinds of transactions including wills. In this case, the masters of *okoi* were actually the bearers of ancient curial families. In order to fulfil their municipal duties, *okoi* used the contributions of small landowners who depended on them. The new system thus transferred the civic liturgy from the individual to his property, a development that is to be seen in Justinianic legislation. In the course of the early Byzantine period the fundamental characteristics of the rise of the individual decurion as benefactor and their acquisition of personal glory and prestige in the execution of their duties, carried by the individualistic trends of the old system of administration, now collapsing, and was replaced by the personal ambitions of provincial governors. The next step was the emergence of powerful and wealthy individuals who assumed some liturgies, but no longer as individuals. Their responsibilities do not appear to have been of great significance, and they were probably financial rather than executive. In fact, civic duty was used to the property of the *okoi* as a financial unit. An individual was expected to perform the liturgy on behalf of the *okoi*, while the *okoi* was responsible for the liturgy. *Okoi* provided

⁶⁷ *Koche XII*, nos. 9128, 9133, 9134 and pp. 210, 211; E. Porpsea, *Incipitula greeca et latina, des moelles P. XII de l'empire byzantin* (Bruxelles 1876), no. 8. In the paper *okoi* mentioned in the text, the guilds are mentioned in *Incipitula P. 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⁶⁸ *Incipitula P. XII de l'empire byzantin*, nos. 9128, 9133, 9134 and pp. 210, 211; E. Porpsea, *Incipitula greeca et latina, des moelles P. XII de l'empire byzantin* (Bruxelles 1876), no. 8. In the paper *okoi* mentioned in the text, the guilds are mentioned in *Incipitula P. 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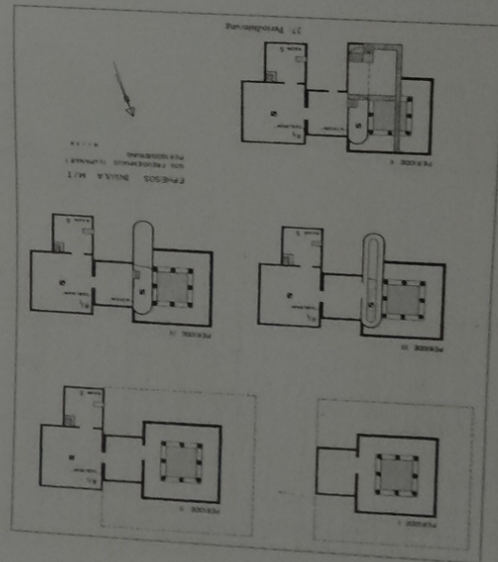
⁶⁹ *Incipitula P. XII de l'empire byzantin*, nos. 9128, 9133, 9134 and pp. 210, 211; E. Porpsea, *Incipitula greeca et latina, des moelles P. XII de l'empire byzantin* (Bruxelles 1876), no. 8. In the paper *okoi* mentioned in the text, the guilds are mentioned in *Incipitula P. XII de l'empire byzantin*, nos. 9128, 9133, 9134, 9135, 9136, 9137, 9138, 9139, 9140, 9141, 9142, 9143, 9144, 9145, 9146, 9147, 9148, 9149, 9150, 9151, 9152, 9153, 9154, 9155, 9156, 9157, 9158, 9159, 9160, 9161, 9162, 9163, 9164, 9165, 9166, 9167, 9168, 9169, 9170, 9171, 9172, 9173, 9174, 9175, 9176, 9177, 9178, 9179, 9180, 9181, 9182, 9183, 9184, 9185, 9186, 9187, 9188, 9189, 9190, 9191, 9192, 9193, 9194, 9195, 9196, 9197, 9198, 9199, 9200, 9201, 9202, 9203, 9204, 9205, 9206, 9207, 9208, 92

PLAN 1. The Southwest Villa at Delphi with installations of artists and shops dating to the last phase of the villa.



THE TRANSFORMATION OF URBAN PUBLIC SPACE

PLAN 2. Plan of the Freudenhaus in Ephesus and subsequent subdivisions. Periods IV and V are Byzantine.



THE BYZANTINE CITY IN THE SIXTH CENTURY

